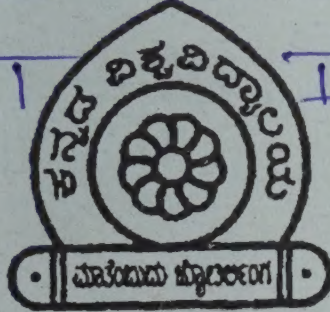


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REVOLUTION 1857



A. B. ABDUR RAHMAN

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# THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

## 1857

B. ABDUR RAHMON, B.A.



AKSHARA GRANTHALAYA



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## PREFACE

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IN this little booklet an attempt has been made to give the facts and events that were responsible for the outbreak of the War of Indian Independence in 1857, otherwise known as the Sepoy Mutiny.

The reader as he goes on reading will realise the causes that gave rise to this struggle. The country as a whole was up in arms and there were disturbances in every city, town and village.

However an attempt has been made to give as much detail as is necessary to understand the situation.

I will be highly pleased if this would help the readers to understand the history of the revolution. No pains have been spared to make it interesting.

BANGALORE CITY, )  
15th Aug. 1957. )

B. A. RAHMON.



## PREFACE

In this little booklet an attempt is made to give the facts and events that have shaped the development of the subject of the history of the world in 1875, and to show the progress of the world in 1875.

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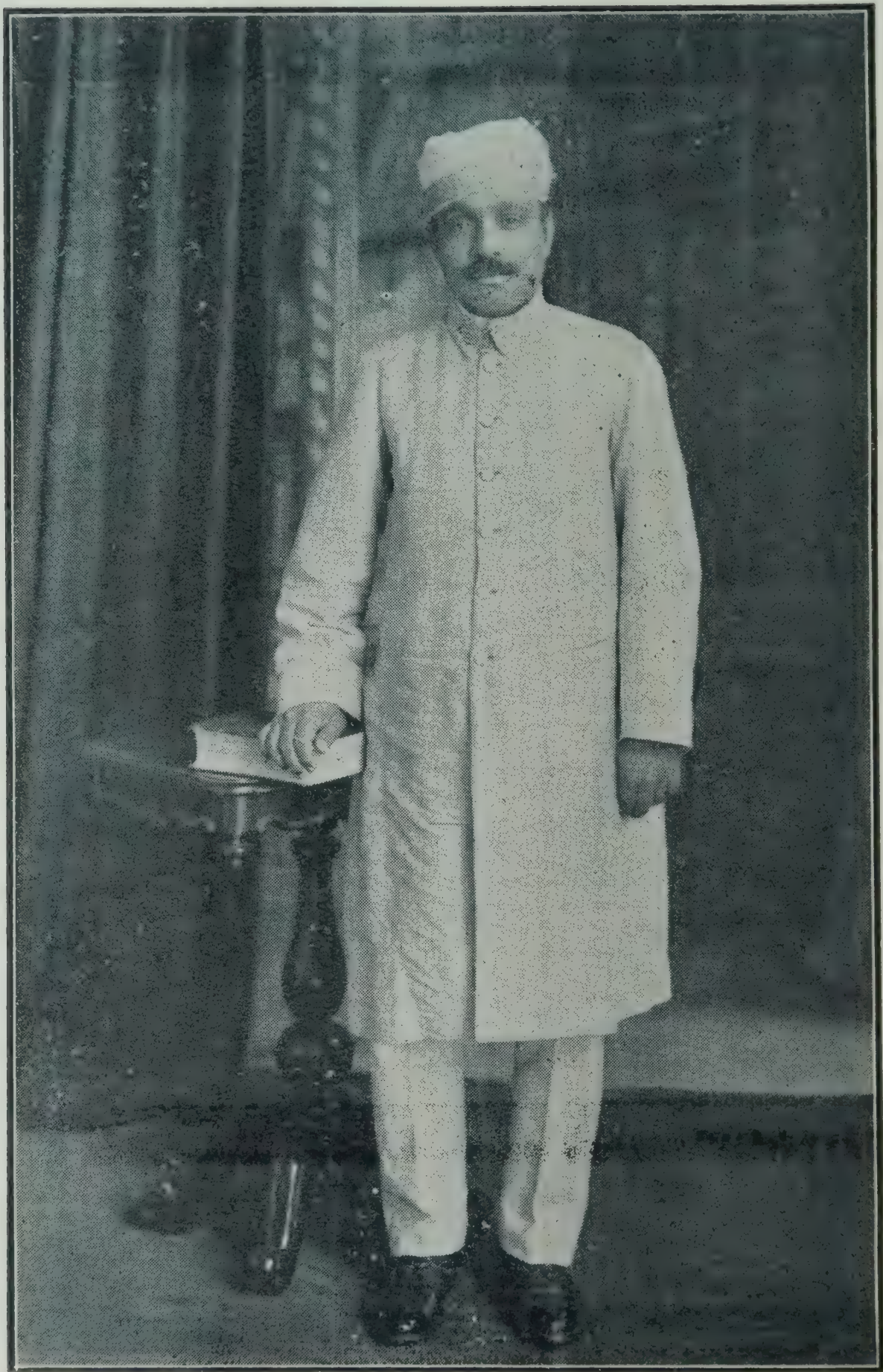












B. ABDUR RAHMON, B.A.



# THE INDIAN REVOLUTION, 1857

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## EAST INDIA COMPANY

Intercourse between India and the West had been going on from very early times, and reached its height during the Roman Empire. All over Europe there was a great demand for Indian goods, and above all for spices, especially pepper, which was used for preserving meat for the winter, flavouring food and drink, and for medicinal purposes.

In the fifteenth century the Portuguese were rising into power. They were a brave adventurous people, and good sailors. In 1487 Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope. The king of Portugal now fitted out an expedition under Vasco da Gama, which, on 29th May 1498 cast anchor in the harbour of Calicut, and there they established a factory. In India their capital was at Goa, which was conquered from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510, and was the seat of the Viceroy. They had also factories at Bombay, Diu and Daman on the Gujarat coast, at Chittagong and Hoogly in the Bay of Bengal, and in Ceylon. But the Portuguese power, though brilliant, was short lived. After the defeat of the Armada, in 1588, the English became the leading sea power.



The English are known as a nation of shopkeepers and that when it comes to buying and selling merchandise, they would be able, to make profitable decisions. But when late in the 16th century A.D. the Dutch merchants began to profiteer, by raising the price of pepper from three shillings per pound to eight shillings, the English merchants had no choice but to pay. They knew that pepper was to be obtained from India together with other exotic spices. One English Company known as the Levent or Turkey Company was formed and conducted the spice trade.

But the accidental capture of a Portuguese ship in 1598 proved an eye-opener to the English. The tonnage of this vessel engaged in the Indian trade was 1,600, three times that of an average English ship and the holders were full of pepper, nutmeg, cloves and spices, ten times more valuable than the customary treasures.

In 1600 a party of English merchants invested 72,000 pounds in a Corporation called the English East India Company and were granted a Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I for monopoly in the sea-borne trade with India. They set out to India by the over land route across Asia Minor. According to the Charter only six ships and six pinnaces were allowed to be plied in the Indian trade. It had only 125 share-holders.

The first ship left English shores on 13th February 1601, and the captain of the ship carried with him a letter from Queen Elizabeth I to Emperor Akbar.



The initial voyage was a grand success and the ship returned to England with 50 tons of pepper in her hold and the merchants reaped a profit of 95 per cent.

Queen Elizabeth I had granted the monopoly for 15 years, but her successor King James I extended it for ever. The Royal Charter prescribed 24 Directors and one Governor to act as the chairman of the Board of Directors.

Although the company was started in 1601, only in 1608, its envoy Captain John Hawkins could see Emperor Jehangir to secure permission to establish a factory in India, and in Dec. 1612 the first English factory was built in Surat, some way up the river Tapti, and another factory at Masulipatam on the Coromandel Coast. In 1639, Sir Francis Day, the agent of the East India Company bought from the Raja of Chandragiri a strip of land on the coast, north of the Portuguese settlement of San Thome and began to erect buildings for the accommodation of the merchants, and a fort to protect them from attack. He named the latter Fort Saint George, after the patron saint of England. Thus the foundation of the presidency of Madras was laid. The Portuguese ceded Bombay to the English in 1661, when an English King, Charles II married a daughter of the Portuguese king, the Island was given as part of the marriage dowry. The place was of little value in those days, and it was a mere fishing village, and its value was so little that Charles II let the Island on which it stood to the East India Company for



the sum of £ 10 a year. It was very unhealthy, but Gerald Aungier, the first Governor, set to work to drain the swamps and reclaim the land overrun by the sea. The town was fortified. In 1690, the company bought from the Nawab of Bengal the village of Kalighat and two other villages for the sum of Rs. 1,194. Job Charnock, the British Agent, erected a fort which he named Fort William, after King William III. At first a factory was started at Hugli, but this was abandoned in favour of the villages on the site of the present city of Calcutta. In 1700, the Bengal factories were placed under the separate control of a president and council at Fort Williams, and thus the Presidency of Bengal was started.

These factories were places where the merchants kept their goods and resided to keep watch over them. In course of time they built forts with walls, and even kept garrisons to protect themselves and their goods. They saw that their lives and property would not be safe unless they were able to fight for them.

In 1740 the capital was three million pounds and the dividend was at 7 per cent, and that till the 1750 the company was mainly a commercial concern. The company's real bid for power started and succeeded only on June 23, 1757, when at Plassey, the Company's forces under Clive defeated Siraj-ud-Dowla, the Nawab of Bengal. More than the territorial gains, the huge amounts collected as war reparation between 1757 and 1766 the Princes and commoners of Bengal had to pay



six million pounds (eight crores of rupees). But with the battle of Burax in 1764, when the company forced the Moghal Emperor in Delhi to cede to it the Diwani of the Royal Provinces in return for a payment of 40 lakhs of rupees, the position of the Company changed completely to that of an empire building arm of the British Government.

The Indian trade was a prize for which many of the European nations strove with each other during four hundred years; and the dreams of an Indian Empire allured some of the greatest European monarchs. The English East India Company outlived all its rivals. At length, when the breaking up of the Moghul Empire compelled it to choose between being driven out of India or ruling over India, it firmly made up its mind. No sufferings, no disasters ever shook for a moment its resolution; nor did the English nation ever fail its East India Company at any crisis of peril. Until the 1760 the Company was able to show sizable profit in its dealings. But when it began to interfere in Indian politics and began to take responsibilities for the internal administration of the country, it was reduced to the verge of bankruptcy. The East India Company did not prosper after Clive left India. The Mysore war cost a lot of money and left the Madras council in debt. The share-holders of the Company hoped to get large profits from the revenue of Bengal and Bihar. The Company found that the cost of paying the army and building forts ate up all its revenue and the profit of its trade as well. Its



affairs were in a bad way. In 1773 the Company was forced to ask for a loan of one million pounds from the British Government. The Government agreed to give the loan.

But in return *all the territory acquired by the Company so far and in future was not to be its own, but Crown property. The Empire had began.*

But when the Company agreed to transfer all the territories acquired by it to the British Government the commercial transactions were relegated to the secondary position by the Board of Directors and from this era the Company became a cancer on Indian economy. The handing over of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa, *i.e.* the right to collect and administer the revenues in these Provinces to the Company meant untold hardships for the Indian masses. The last Moghal Governor of Bengal had realised only eight hundred thousand pounds from the peasants as land revenue, whereas within three decades the Company began to *extort* thrice the amount from the helpless cultivators.

But that the vast Empire which had grown up in the East should be administered by the British through a body which was nominally a commercial concern was long an anachronism and slowly the British Parliament began to remove the main props of the Company. The monopoly over the Indian trade was finally withdrawn in 1813 and in 1833 the tea trade with China was removed from the preserves of the Company. The



Company was transformed from a commercial to a governing body. The last vestiges of the Company's monopoly disappeared, and it practically ceased to exist as a commercial body. Any Englishman could now come and settle in the country, and own property.

The establishment of British rule in India was a strange story. They came in the name of trade and slowly entrenched themselves in the country. The people did not even know in the beginning that the British had established their rule.

As for the economic impact of the Company on India, with the knowledge that the Company was responsible for the destruction of so many Indian Industries like ship building, muslin weaving, it is difficult for an Indian to view dispassionately their activities in India.

In spite of a huge tribute sent every year by India to Great Britain, by 1792 the Company had placed a public debt of 10 million pounds on India's back. Interest charge on this debt took away further wealth from India, and Lord Wellesley's wars raised it to 21 million pounds. By 1830 it had become thirty million pounds and the war with Afghanistan in 1844 raised it to 44½ million pounds. In 1850 the Sikh Wars made it 55 million pounds, and on the eve of the Sepoy Mutiny it stood at 59½ million pounds.

Further after the failure of the Mutiny, by the Indian Act of 1858, the British Government



paid 12 million pounds to the Company as compensation for taking over the Indian Empire and debited the amount to the Indian public debt. As such, within a century, the Company had saddled the Indian nation with a public debt of over 70 million pounds, where none existed before. And further this amount was exclusive of 98 million pounds of the debt of the Company which were charged to the Indian treasury. Ironically enough of this 98 million pounds 37 million pounds was the expense of suppressing the first war of Indian Independence, known to the British as the Sepoy Mutiny.

In February 1858 the Company presented a petition to Queen Victoria in a last attempt to save its existence and offered to let a Minister of the Crown to control the administration of Indian affairs by a Council of 18 Directors of the Company. But the Sepoy Mutiny (which occurred at a time when the Company was maintaining a force of 2,38,000 troops in India) had made the English nation alert and the Prime Minister advised the Queen to reject the petition.

The British Parliament felt that the time had now come to bring the Company's Government to an end. The news of the revolution that made dissolution of the Company imperative determined Parliament to abolish the powers of the Company and transfer the Government of India directly to the Crown. The powers and duties of the Company were now transferred by an act of the British Parliament passed in 1858 to a new



Secretary of State for India, who was to be assisted by a council of fifteen members analogous to the old Court of Directors, the President of the Board of Control and the secret committee and the members of Council to be partially recruited from among them.

For about 90 years the British territories in India had been managed by the Company's Board of Directors. After 1784 this was watched and checked by the Board of Control appointed by the Parliament under Pitt's Act of 1784. The Company was like a servant or a substitute permitted by the Parliament to do the work of ruling India. Now the Crown and Parliament of the British Isles took the Government into their own hands and dismissed the servant or substitute.

The Company was founded under Queen Elizabeth I, it had been remodelled under Queen Anne and now it was to be destroyed under Queen Victoria. Thus after existing for two hundred and 58 years after the first ship reached the coast of India and little more than a century after the battle of Plassey which laid the foundation of its territorial power. It had an interesting and eventful history. At first it was only a merchant carrying trade, and then it became a soldier, fighting with princes and winning kingdoms and at last it was the overlord of all India.

The Company itself was not abolished, for under the Act of 1833 the share-holders were guaranteed an annuity of £ 630,900 for a minimum



period of 40 years. But it was reduced to a skeleton, *viz.* a Chairman, five Directors, a Secretary and a clerk.

In this state it continued till the right of redemption might be exercised. On March 15, 1873 an Act was passed which enabled the Secretary of State for India in Council to give the stock-holders the option of taking India stock in lieu of their holdings or of being paid off at the stipulated rate. It was also enacted that on the completion of this operation, the East India Company, should be dissolved. And dissolved it was accordingly on June 1st 1874.

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## ANNEXATIONS AND CONQUESTS

In 1788, Marquis of Wellesley (Earl of Mornington) came out to India as Governor-General. At this time in addition to the English, there were four powers in India who wished to be supreme. They were the Nizam at Hyderabad, Tippu Sultan of Mysore, Maharatta, and the Nawab of Oudh. The French were at this time, at war with the English in Europe. They hoped with the help of the Indian States, they can drive the English out of India. Both the Nizam and Tippu Sultan employed Frenchmen to train their troops in European methods of warfare. After the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 a Republic had been proclaimed and the power fell into the hands of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a bitter enemy of the English, and one of his ambitions was the restoration of French power in India. Dowlath-Rao Sindhe, the Mahratta ruler of Gwalior had also employed French officers to train his armies. Tippu Sultan was also negotiating with France. He was requested to disarm and abandon his French alliance, but he returned an evasive reply. Wellesley therefore made an alliance with the Mahrattas and Nizam and sent an army under General Harris, which defeated the Mysore army and took Seringapatam by storm (4th May 1799). Tippu Sultan died sword in hand fighting to the last. Thus perished the 'Tiger of Mysore', the cleverest and most determined of all the op-



ponents of the British. He was buried under a handsome tomb in Seringapatam. His sons were sent to Vellore. The Mysore territory was then split-up. The British took the province of Kanara and all the land across the Peninsula between the Coromandal and Malabar coasts. They also kept in their own hands the whole coast line of the Mysore kingdom, and the Nizam was rewarded for his help with Gooty and Gurrankonda.

In 1801, on the death of the old Nawab of Arcot, Wellesley took over the Karnatak and placed it under the control of the Madras Council. The Port of Surat and its dependent country were taken under the control of the Company.

*The Subsidiary System.*—According to this, the Company was to become the supreme, or overlord of India, and the Indian princes were to be its feudatories, or dependent princes by placing themselves under English protection and to admit an English army into their territory, and to receive an English Resident at their courts, Wellesley felt, as a patriotic Englishman that the English alone could be such a power. A part of the Company's army was posted in each Feudatory State, and the prince paid a tribute of money, or subsidy, in return for the protection given to him. The prince was free to govern his own country as he liked, but he could not enter into a treaty with, or make war upon, any other Indian prince or foreign ruler.

The weakness of this system lay in the fact that the ruler, being guaranteed in the possession of his dominions but deprived of all the essential attributes of sovereignty, lost that stimulus to good Government which is supplied by fear of rebellion and deposition, and in all the States the subjects suffered by the change. Mysore had already been placed under an agreement of this kind. In 1800, the Nizam entered into a treaty with the English accepting in full the Subsidiary system, and he received an English force in his territory. To maintain this he ceded to the

Annexation of ceded  
Districts of Oudh,  
Bellary, Cudapa, Kur-  
nool and Anantapur,  
1801.

English the territories which fell to his share in the partition of Mysore. Thus Bellary, Cudapa, Kurnool and Anantapur became part of British India,

and are still known as the 'ceded Districts' because they were ceded or handed back, by the Nizam to the British. By these additions the Madras Presidency was made almost as it is today, consisting of the Northern Circars, conquered from the French by the English, the ceded Districts, the Karnataka, and Tanjore.

In 1801 Oudh was forced to submit to a similar arrangement. The

Annexation of Oudh  
in Rohilkhand,  
1801.

Nawab signed a treaty at Lucknow giving up Doab and Rohilkhand to the British.

Thus the Nizam, the Maharaja of Mysore, and the Nawab of Oudh, who were all great Indian Princes, already owned the Company as



their over-lord, and were reckoned as feudatory allies, but the Mahrattas were still outside British control. There were five Mahratta rulers (1) The Peshwa at Poona, (2) the Gaekwar at Barodā, (3) Sindhia at Gwalior, (4) Holkar at Indore in Malwa, and (5) Bhonsale at Nagpur. But these princes were not on good terms with one another. The Peshwa, Baji Rao II feared and hated Holkar and put his half brother to death. Holkar at once started with an army to take revenge for the murder of his brother. A battle was fought before the walls of Poona in which Holkar was victorious. Baji Rao fled to Bassein and took refuge with the English. He agreed to become an ally of the Company and signed the treaty of Bassein in 1802. A British army was led to Poona and the Peshwa was again set on his throne.

Meanwhile Sindhia and the Bhonsale had gathered their armies and marched them to the frontiers of the Peshwas' territory. Wellesley fell upon them and destroyed their armies in the two fierce battles of Assai and Argaun, and he took the fortress of Giwalgarh. The two Mahratta leaders were glad to seek for peace, by the treaty of Deva-gaum Bhonsale ceded Orrisa, and Sindhe by the treaty of the Siraj lost most of his territories north of the Yamona. Aligarh, Agra, and Delhi were captured and both of them submitted to a subsidiary alliance. In 1804 Holkar was beaten at Dig and Indore was captured, and many of the towns in Malwa fell into the hands of the Bombay troops.

Annexation of Orrisa,  
Aligarh, Agra, Delhi,  
1803.

Capture of Indore,  
Malwa, 1804.

Holkar had to save himself by a flight into the Panjab.

In six years, Wellesley had changed the face of India. He was avowedly and openly in favour of conquest. In 1798 the English possessions were limited to a strip of territory round Calcutta, the Island of Bombay and the City of Madras. By 1804, Bengal and southern India was in British hands, British forces occupied Poona and Hyderabad, and British Residents were stationed at all the Indian courts. Practically no part of the country save Rajputana, Sind and the Panjab retained its independence. He had added wide territories to British India and subdued many princes, his Government was very costly and brought the Company no gain. The Company did not want a large empire, they asked for profitable trade. The Directors often blamed Wellesley for his way of governing and he was recalled in 1805, Clive founded the British Empire in India, but Wellesley enlarged it and made it supreme. When he left India the Company was really the Kaiser-i-Hind. His ambitious scheme thoroughly alarmed the Directors who still looked upon the company as a commercial concern and hated Wellesley's plans for the wholesale annexation of territory. After him the Governors-General were

Bourbon and Mauri-  
tious in 1809.  
Java in 1811

strictly ordered to return to the policy of 'non-intervention', or peace at any price. Bourbon and Mauritius were captured in

1809 and Java in 1811.



In 1813, the Charter came up for renewal. It

Renewal of Charter,  
1813.

was renewed once more, but the monopoly of trade with India, which up to this time the Com-

pany had held, was abolished, and thus allowed any English merchant to take part in the Indian trade, and missionaries to enter without restriction.

In 1816 the British troops advanced close to the capital of Khatmandu in Nepal. The Raja signed the treaty of Sagawli, by which he gave up to the British the western part of his kingdom which contains the hill stations of India, Simla, Nainital,

Annexation of Simla,  
Nainital, Mussori &  
Almora, 1816.

Massuri and Almora. He also agreed to receive a British Resident at Khatmandu. All the Mahratta chiefs rebelled

one after another and were defeated. The fighting of the Mahrattas was dissolved. The chiefs of the different States in Rajputana also came under British protection. In 1825 the English advanced into Burma and Bandula; the able

The Burmese War,  
1826.

general of Burmese was killed and peace was made in February 1826 at Yandabu on the

Annexation of Arakain  
and Tenasserin.

Irrawady. The Burmese agreed to give up Arakan and Tenasserin, withdraw from Assam, and admit a British

Resident at Ava Burmese capital, and pay an indemnity of £ 1,000,000. The

Capture of Bharatpur,  
1826,

Jat fortress of Bharatpur was attacked by a British force and

Annexation of Coorg,  
1834.

hitherto impregnable fort was taken possession of. The State

of Coorg was annexed in 1834.

Renewal of Charter,  
1833.

The Charter came up for consideration again in 1833. The Company under this renewal was now altogether prohibited from trading and was made to concern itself wholly with the work of administration, it practically ceased to exist as a commercial body.

Annexation of Sind,  
1843.

The Mirs of Sind. The British suspected the conduct of some of the Amirs, and it was said they were all plotting with the enemy, so the Government sent an army against them. They were defeated and Sind was annexed in 1843.

Annexation of Punjab,  
1849.

In 1848 Lord Dalhousie, landed in India, since Lord Hastings time, that is for fifty years, India had been dominated by the British Government at Calcutta. At the close of the Second Sikh War, 21st February 1849 the Sikh army was practically destroyed. Dalhousie saw that there was no alternative but to annex the Punjab altogether. Thus the Punjab became a part of the British dominions in India. The British

Annexation of Lower  
Burma, 1852.  
Rangoon & Pegu.

Frontier now extended up to the mountains. At the close of Second Burmese War 1852 the important port of Rangoon was captured in December 1852 Pegu or Lower Burma was annexed to the British India. By this means the Burmese Government was shut off from the sea, and the whole coast line down to the Malay Peninsula passed under the British Control,



Annexation of Berar,  
1853.

The reigning Nizam, Nawab Nasser-ud-Dowlah owed the Company's Government the sum of Rs. 40 lakhs. It was the last instalment of a debt of £ 5,280,000, which represented the arrears due to the Company for maintenance during 33 years of a body of cavalry, 9,000 strong, commanded by English officers, known as the Hyderabad Contingent.

When Lord Dalhousie, whose obsession for enlarging the sphere of the Company's raj earned him the sobriquet of the 'Annexationist', called upon the Nizam either to pay down Rs. 40 lakhs, or in default to give territorial security.

As the financial condition of the State was not good, it was at this crisis that one Mr. John Dighton, son of a general officer in Bengal Army, who was engaged in banking and merchantile pursuits with Nizam's Dominions formed a syndicate under his chairmanship and established a State Bank with the approval and co-operation of the Nizam's Prime Minister, Nawab Siraj-ud-dowlah. The capital was quickly subscribed and the Bank loaned the Nizam Rs. 40 lakhs. The Prime Minister duly informed the British Resident that he was prepared to discharge the Nizam's debt in full. Lord Dalhousie proscribed the Hyderabad State Bank under an Act of Parliament prohibiting the lending of money by a British subject to an Indian Prince without the consent and approval of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. The consent assur-

ed to be necessary, Lord Dalhousie would not of course, give.

It soon became apparent that Lord Dalhousie was really not concerned about the payment of the debt, and was using it as a pretext for annexing a big slice of the Nizam's richest territories, the Berars. Thus the Berar Province were assigned to the Company's Government by the treaty of 1858, which was virtually an instrument of annexation. The Nizam was dragooned into signing it under the menace of an armed invasion and occupation.

In 1853 the Company's Charter was again renewed. It allowed the Company to rule India still, but it took away from the Directors the right of choosing young men and appointing them to the civil and military services in India. Now, however, the Parliament ordered that a public examination could be held every year, and posts should be given to the candidates who passed out highest.

Dalhousie now turned to land reforms. Everywhere the aristocrat ruled, and set up small States within States. The talukdars looked after the land, levied their own taxes and gave their portions of revenues to the king. Dalhousie decided to wipe out these landlords. The Raja of Manipur was deprived of 116 out of 158 villages in his estate. The Raja of Rohilkhand lost 138 out

Renewal of Charter,  
1853.

Annexation of  
lapse.



of his 216 villages. The men of substance were reduced to general poverty.

In Jagadishpura Kumar Singh was deprived of his jagir and had to seek the jungles for shelter. Taxation was heavy and in Panipet 136 men were retained to collect the revenue by force. The administrative machinery was inefficient and insufficient. Economic discontent added fuel to the smouldering fire. Here was an annoying uncertainty about land. In the North-western Provinces, the rent roll was divided into three parts, sixty-six and two-third per cent for the Government; eighteen per cent for the talukdars; and fifteen and one-third per cent for the reorganised proprietor as profit.

Thus most of the land passed into the hands of the money-lenders. Most of the talukdars lost half their villages, some lost their all. Heavy assessment and increased duties drove the peasants frantic.

The economic impact of British rule was deep and far reaching. Its ruthless routine brought great misery. The adivasis who were tribal people living in the hills were caught in it. The British invaded their territory, subjugated them and deprived of their land and they were made serfs. They revolted, they were put down with the iron heel.

Dalhousie dreamed of a great and glorious British Empire. By the battle of Plassey, they

had acquired the three rich provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. By the Panjab wars, they had annexed the Panjab. By the Mysore and Mahratta wars they had got those provinces in their grip. And by the Burmese war they conquest Pegu or lower Burma. India was a huge sub-continent and had to be mastered. Then he had an inspiration, he promulgated the doctrine of lapse.

The right of adoption in the absence of a son is one of the most cherished doctrines of the Hindus. It was a custom among Indian princes, who had no sons born to them, to adopt a son, and the adopted son had all the rights of an heir. But in the time of the Mughal Empire, a dependent prince or noble had to get the leave of the Delhi Emperor before he could adopt a son. The Company, as we have seen, took the place of the Emperor; it was now the suzerain of India. It had to decide whether it would allow a prince without heir to adopt a son or not. If it did not permit an adoption to take place, then the dependent State would *lapse* to the suzerain, that is, it would fall back into the hands of the overlord because there was no heir to receive it 'Annexation by Lapse' thus means the falling of the estate of a subject prince into the hands of the overlord by reason of there being no son to inherit. He strictly ordered that no adopted son should succeed to a kingdom without previously receiving the consent of the British, who were the paramount power. Acting on this principal, Dalhousie took under British administration various States when their rulers died without a heir.



Appa Saheb the ruler of Satara died in 1848 without a male heir. The princes of Satara were the descendants of Shivaji, the great Mahratta leader. Their power and glory had departed, but still they were great in tradition and were looked upon with respect by the people. The question arose whether a son could be adopted and then opted on to the throne. Sir George Clerk, the Governor of Bombay looked at the treaty of 1819 and saw "that the British Government agreed to cede in perpetual sovereignty to the Raja of Satara his heirs and his successors", the territories which he had held and at once declared himself in favour of the continuance of the native raj.

But the resolute, unbending Dalhousie would have none of it. He had written to the Council of the Board of Directors that he had intended to annex the country and the Council agreed, and the principality of Satara was annexed to the British dominions by right of lapse.

Beyond the South-western frontier of Bengal lay the small territory of Sambhalpur. In 1849 Narayan Singh, its ruler, died without a male heir. The State lapsed into the British dominions.

When Gangadhar Rao the ruler of Jhansi died in 1853 the Queen Lakshmi Bai sent a letter to the Governor General announcing the adoption of a heir and requesting him to confirm it. Dalhousie put his thumb down. The State lapsed.

In 1854, the Nawab of Carnatic died without  
 1854-1855. a legal heir and in 1855, the Raja  
 of Tanjore passed away likewise.  
 Both the States lapsed into the British territories.

On 4th February 1856, the ancient kingdom  
 of Oudh was annexed and Wajid Ali Shah was  
 Oudh, 1856. deposed and packed off to Cal-  
 cutta to live the rest of his life  
 there. This brought about a fitting finale to the  
 whole story of grab and greed.

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## UNREST

Steeped in custom and tradition, India did not take kindly to the reforms of Lord Dalhousie. He could not understand the tenacity with which the people cling to their old traditions. He could not sympathise with the veneration they had for their ancient dynasties.

His reforms started with education. He fully realised that without education, India could never be great and prosperous. He started schools and colleges. He was very anxious to encourage the vernacular languages, because

Education. he realised that only in this way can education reach the masses.

It was decided to open vernacular schools in which all classes rich or poor alike might study. Thus the people were enabled to get a simple education in their mother tongue. He made English the main language to be learnt. Thus those who wanted education through the English language had ample opportunity.

He imported teachers from England, who trained the local men. 'The Babus' were distributed and education began in right earnest. But the Brahmin priests and the Muslim moulvies did not like it.

Wives and daughters of white men were brought to aid in this great revolution of the

change of ideas and the ignorant Indian women began to pick and learn western ways and mannerisms.

The men folk felt angry. The priests and the moulvies protested. But Dalhousie swept aside all opposition.

1853 the first railway, twenty miles long, from Bombay to Thana, was opened, another was constructed from Calcutta to Raniganj-coal fields.

Railways.

The first telegraph line was erected in 1831, and it ran from the mouth of the Hugli to Calcutta. When

Telegraph.

Dalhousie gave up his office over 3,000 miles of telegraph wire had been laid and were in use. He introduced a regularly

Post Office.

organised postal service and he lowered the rate to half an anna, formerly the charge was

several annas. The introduction of railways, of post office, and of the telegraph, had been the cause of much astonishment. The rapid and sudden change from old to new conditions caused some disturbance in the minds of the people. Let us pause here for a while, railways, telegraphs were revolutionary innovations those days. True they broke up the economic fabric and helped to serve as what Karl Max called the unconscious tool of history. These and the western influence introduced no doubt to promote British interests, made India cast off the feudal cloak and put on a more progressive garb.



Missionaries burning with the zeal to save the souls of the heathens, flocked into India. Dressed in black with sombre faces, they spread throughout the land, preaching the gospel of Christ.

All this caused dissatisfaction. The Hindu raged with terror and fear and hatred. Muslims became violent. The rancour turned to hatred when their religion was being tampered with. Destruction of caste began softly but the authorities had cannon.

All this time the sepoy was unaffected. He was a faithful man and fought well. The English liked him and he liked the English. The English liked the sepoy so much that an ardour for military improvement grew. He had to be drilled after a new English fashion. He had to be dressed after a new English fashion. He was to be shaved after a new English fashion.

The caste mark on the forehead was removed. The ear-ring was taken off. The musalman was more affected by the removal of ear-ring. He was given this at his birth after a patron saint. The beards had to go. Some new regulations were issued to the sepoys as to their mode of dress.

The Rajput jumped at this atrocity. They had to wear cumbersome dress and to top them all a topi and to the Indian it was synonymous with a christian.

This over enthusiasm of the British brought about the mutiny at Vellore in 1806. The sepoy rose in rebellion and one hundred Europeans were murdered. The sons of Tipu Sultan were suspected of having had a share in the mutiny and so they were removed to Calcutta.

Vellore Mutiny.

In 1808 a rebellion broke out in Travancore in the course of which the British Resident and others lost their lives, and troubles occurred in Bundelkhund, where the local rulers were quite unable to maintain order.

Travancore Mutiny.

Bundelkhund.

The officers of the East India Company's Army were full of grievances. The officers of the army of the Company resented the growing civilian control and influence. In days of war the military had its way. In times of peace no civil administration can tolerate military control. A tendency to get rich quick, irrespective of means, affected almost all the British in India.

Madras Mutiny.

By 1809 conditions in the Madras Army had become deplorable. There was a demand that the allowances paid to the officers should be equal to those paid to their compeers in the Bengal Army. Officers belonging to the Company's cadre were sore that those who come from England with the King's Commission superseded them in seniority and were apt to walk with the prize posts. And there was the question of the



bazaar fund. The Army Officers had taken to themselves the right to levy a tax on the bazaars in their cantonments. When Army Officers were provided with pensions the Government stopped the practice of levying a bazaar fund. The Government had also decided about this time to do away with the tent contract system. Officers commanding infantry regiments had been paid Rs. 952 every month and those commanding cavalry regiment Rs. 658½. This allowance was meant to help the officers to maintain and supply tents and other camp equipment to their regiments. The system had overgrown its use and had to be scrapped. They resented the loss of this considerable monthly payment.

The disaffection in the Madras Army was something which affected all the officers from the Commander-in-Chief downwards. General Macdowell the Commander-in-Chief was in full sympathy with the discontented officers and himself nursed a particular grievance against the Government because the Commander-in-Chief had been deprived of a seat in the Governor's Council which so long had belonged to that office. Sedition had spread far. The Nawab of Arcot's debts were being investigated by a Commission from Bengal and some Europeans in Madras resented this, because they had their fingers in this huge stinking pie. When Sir George Barlow took charge as Governor of Madras towards the end of 1807, conditions among the British in Madras were very bad indeed. A spirit of Mutiny was abroad. The army in Madras embarked on an open mutiny,

It was at Masulipatam that the first actual outbreak of violence occurred on 25th June 1809. Colonel Innes, in command, was placed under arrest by other officers under the leadership of Major Storey. The Hyderabad subsidiary force, too, was in a state of mutiny. From Travancore similar demands were put forward, the Governor sent for troops from other provinces and from Ceylon. It is interesting to note that a direct appeal was made to the sepoys not to involve themselves in a fight which could be of no benefit at all to them. Only at Seringapatam was there bloodshed and loss of sepoy life. Colonel Bell had ultimately to surrender the fort and with that the British Mutiny came to an end. It is noteworthy that the Government of Madras were willing to use Mysore troops against the rebellious officers. This mutiny shook the fabric of British rule in India. A disquieting feature of

Mutiny at Barrakpur,  
1824.

the situation was a mutiny which occurred in the 47th Bengal Native Infantry at Barrakpur. The sepoys objected, on caste grounds, to crossing the black water to Burma. The mutiny was suppressed with terrible severity and the regiment disbanded at Barrakpur. Then the English opened their eyes.

The sepoy was only a "native" a "nigger" a "slave." His privileges were taken away. His promotions stopped. His pay was cut.

When he was on duty he presented or carried arms to an English officer; but an English soldier



“suffered a native officer to pass by.” Even an English sergeant commanded native officer of the highest rank.

The highest pay the sepoy got after becoming the subedar of the infantry was a mere Rs. 174 a month, a little less than the minimum pay of a raw European recruit.

This hurt the sepoy's self-respect. His honour was gone, his integrity was shaken. He was a nobody, and this he resented. There was no morale in the army.

The British were waging wars in Burma and needed the Indian contingents badly. But the sepoy was afraid, not of the fighting, but of his religions. Crossing the “black water” meant losing one's caste.

The ruler at Kabul was a very able man named Dost Mahamed. Shah Shuja, the grand-son of Ahmed Sah Durrani who had been driven out in 1809, was living under British protection at Ludhiana, Dost Mahamed was suspected of being on too friendly terms with Russia. Lord Auckland concerned the idea of restoring Shah Shuja to the throne of Kabul as a puppet in the hands of the Indian Government and deposing Dost Mahamed. In November 1838 the British forces slowly made their way to Kandahar, and from there to Kabul, which was entered in August 1840. Shah Shuja was duly installed and Dost Mahamed who had never harmed the

English was sent as State prisoner to Calcutta. British forces were posted at Khandahar and Jalalabad. In Kabul itself the command was given to General Elphington.

*Risings at Kabul.*—All seemed peaceful on the surface, but the Afgans were seething with fury at the occupation of their capital by a foreign army. In November 1841, rising broke out in Kabul city, Bernes, one of the political officers, was besieged and murdered in his house by a furious mob. A month later, another political officer named Magnagthem was enticed to a conference and assassinated. The British force was now cut off, and in great danger.

On 6th January 1842, British Army, 4,000 strong with 12,000 followers, marched out of Kabul on its way to Jalalabad. No sooner had the troops entered the mountain passes then they were fiercely attacked by the tribesmen. On 13th January the anxious watchers on the walls of Jalalabad saw a single horseman ride up to the gate. It was Dr. Bryden, the solitary survivor of the army. This was the greatest disaster that ever fell a British force in India.

*The General Service Enlistment Act*—was enforced in 1856. By this Act the sepoy was asked to serve across the seas. The sepoy became stubborn. "Kill me but I will not cross the Kala pani" he said. The English did not kill him. They sent him home to face unemployment. He was glad to leave the army.



Dalhousie's reforms had been too quickly and too drastically applied. In a slow moving conservative country like India, it is dangerous to go too fast and too far. The Hindus had been deeply disturbed by the abolition of the kingdom of Satara end of the last of the descendants of the great Shivaji. The queen, the queen mother and the ministers were upset by Dalhousie's decision. They decided to send an agent to England and lay before the Court of Directors their case. So Rango Bapuji an intelligent man was despatched forthwith, even of Nagpur, the household revolted and the queens sent agents to London, but without any hope. The Rani of Jhansi was very angry because she was not allowed to adopt a son. But she was made of sterner stuff. Like a sleeping tigress she roused at last and 'said it cannot be'. 'I will not give up my Jhansi.' She had challenged the British power, and the British were shocked. The rest of India took sides with her. Lakshmi Bai was not alone in her fight for her right.

Baji Rao II having no heir, adopted Dhondo Pant Nana Saheb as his successor. Nana Saheb was the son of Madhu Rao of the village of Venu at the foot-hills of Matheran. He was a respectable man migrated to Bithoor and took service under the Peshwa to sustain his livelihood. Nana was a brilliant lad and the Peshwa was taken in

by the lad's extraordinary intelligence. He decided to adopt him.

But when Baji Rao died, the British refused to acknowledge the adoption. But Nana did not keep still. He choose Azimullah Khan, a teacher who was arduous in his work and showed great intelligence in everything he did to go to London and plead before the Directors his case. Azimullah went and tried his best but could achieve nothing.

Azimullah Khan was a clever man, having decided to return to India, on his way, he halted at Sevastapol, where the Cremean War was in progress. Here he saw how the British were being trounced by the Russians and the myth that the Englishman was invincible was smashed.

Azim returned home to Bithoor and reported all what had happened in London and Europe to his master, Nana Saheb, they planned to do something drastic about it.

A revolt, to harass the British. To overthrow the imperial yoke.

But preparations had to be made, conspiracies had to be hatched, allies had to be got and the time had to be fixed for the general uprising and final overthrow.

So Nana Saheb and Azimulla Khan set out on a pilgrimage with a huge retinue, visiting all the important cities in India.



On 4th February 1856, the kingdom of Oudh was annexed and Wajid Ali Shah was deported and packed off to Calcutta to live the rest of his life there. Thus the province of Oudh to thenceforth, be a component part of the British Indian Empire. And though this had nothing to do with the Doctrine of Lapse, it brought about a fitting finale to the whole story of grab and greed.

The people did not take things as quietly as was seen on the surface. They seethed inside with rage and hate. The British had grabbing hands and the exit of the last Muslim ruler caused quite a stir in other parts of India. The Muslims felt out-raged. It was an act they could not easily forgive.

The king decided that he would proceed to England with his royal family and lay his grievances there. He knew that the British had wronged him.

The whole city went in mourning. But the king fell ill in Calcutta and died shortly after. His brother, his mother and Major Bird, the ex-Assistant Resident who found the British his own countrymen, guilty of foulplay, started for England to lay the case of Wajid Ali Shah before the House of Commons.

The country groaned under the shackles of an overpowering demon that brought nothing but misunderstanding, sickness, hate and misery.

The British were actually now sitting on a keg of powder. It only needed a spark to light the fuse. And the spark came in the form of greased cartridges on 22nd January 1857.

The Brown Bess, the infantry musket was replaced by the new Enfield Rifle which had a long range and fired better than the old one. To load the rifle and shoot with ease, lubrication of the cartridges was necessary. Orders soon followed that the sepoy should bite off the greasy portion with their teeth instead of tearing it away with their hands as formerly.

Factories were opened for the manufacture of these new greased cartridges at Dum Dum, Meerut and Kanpur. Thousands of cartridges were turned out to supply the whole of India.

On 22nd January 1857 a lascar was returning home from the factory. It was rather a hot day and he was very thirsty. Finding no water, he became desperate. Then he saw a Brahmin sepoy walk along with a vessel full of water. He was of the 34th Native Infantry, one of the battalions that was the pride of Bengal. The lascar approached the sepoy for a drink and the sepoy felt outraged by the man's audacity. He abused and berated him. He remarked that he (the sepoy) would not long carry his head so high as the use of the cartridges whose tops they must tear with their teeth was smeared with the fat of the cow and the pig. "I may be of low caste but I will still have my caste whereas you will have no caste at all and you will be damned eternally in hell for it."



The horrified sepoy ran to his lines and the story spread like wild fire, equally disconcerting to the Hindu and the Musalman. The cow was sacred to the former and the pig abhorrent to the latter. The story of the greased cartridges spread panic among the masses—their religion was in danger.

When the officers knew about this, they tried to reassure their men, but in vain. The alarm extended throughout the army and was not to be allayed. An order was at once issued from Calcutta giving the sepoy leave to buy their own fat (butter) for the cartridges. Still the sepoy refused.

But the excitement spread all over the land. The regiments all over India grew restive. They look on the English with suspicion and lived under an overwhelming strain.

During the rule of Dalhousie in the place of old kingdom, British rule had extended itself in all directions. The annexation of Oudh undoubtedly had unsettled men's mind and displeased the Bengal army. There were several princes and nobles who hated the British Raj. The Rani of Jhansi was very angry because she was not allowed to adopt a son. Nana Saheb too was angry because the Government would not go on paying him the pension of eight lakhs which they had been paying to Baji Rao. Dalhousie had warned the family of the king of Delhi, that when old Bahadur Shah died, they would have to

leave Delhi. This made them angry. Moreover, the king had a young wife with a son. The mother hoped that her son might be one day the king as his forefathers had been. Even many of the Royal Princes were alarmed, when they saw Dalhousie annexing one State after another under the "Doctrine of lapse." Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi, Tanjore and States in Bengal, Orissa and elsewhere became British territory, and the people were afraid that the Government intended in course of time to annex all the States in the hands of Indian Princes.

Then again, in different parts of India, agents of the royal house of Delhi were moving about exciting hostility against the English. Not from Delhi only, but from every fallen dynasty came preachers of disaffection. Nana Saheb and the Rani of Jhansi also secretly fomented envy and hatred of the British in the minds of the people.

The sepoy in the army were discontented because they were told that in future they would have to go wherever they were ordered, even across the salt sea or black water. They were not satisfied with their wages. They thought they themselves had really won the empire for the British in India, and they could easily defeat the European troops, who formed only one-fifth of the army. A state of dissatisfaction had long been noticed amongst the sepoys.

The Bengal Army had long been in a most unsatisfactory condition. Unlike the Madras and



Bombay Armies, which recruited men regardless of caste or race, it was composed exclusively of Hindustani sepoys of the higher castes. These high caste sepoys were willing enough to fight in wars in India itself, but service in foreign countries was intensely unpopular. They had not forgotten the sufferings and humiliations of the disastrous Afghan campaign in 1842. The majority of the Bengal sepoys were recruited in Oudh, and they dislike the deposition of their ruler.

There was complete dissatisfaction and discontent among the princes, nobles, peoples and the sepoys. They did not want the British to continue in the country and they wanted to put an end to the British administration. This was increased by the members of retainers, soldiers and others who were thrown out of work by the annexation of the Indian States and closing down of the courts of the princes dispossessed of their titles. The people then realised the real nature of British designs. A sentiment then grew against the establishment of a foreign power in India.

The orthodox religious opinion, both the Hindu and Muslim, had been alarmed by the introduction of secular education and the activities of christian missioneries. There was perfect unity among Hindus and Muslims. The Pandits and the Moulvies now began to preach that their religions were in danger, hurling vituperations at the English.

Sixteen miles away from Calcutta on the banks of the Hugli was the military station of

Barrackpur. There were four regiments stationed here. The second Grenadiers which had distinguished itself in the Santhal Campaign ; the forty-third which had helped General Nott to hold Khandahar, the thirty-fourth that had fought gallantly in the Mahratta and Sikh wars ; and the seventieth which had rendered good service in the Second Sikh War. The news of the greased cartridges reached here and the men grew uneasy. An ill-feeling prevailed. The telegraph station there was burnt down. The news travelled to Berhampur a hundred miles off Barrackpur and the nineteenth also set about on incendiarism and insubordination as in Barrackpur. Every sepoy looked stubborn and angry. There was bad temper amongst the ranks. They went from man to man and everyone uttered "Sab lal ho jayega" (all will be red) that meant that India would flow with blood.

Moulvi Ahmedullah Shah was a remarkable man. His native place was Faizabad in Oudh. A man of great abilities, of undaunted courage of stern determination, he was the leading spirit behind the revolution. After annexation of Oudh, he travelled over the North-west Provinces. He stayed for a time in Agra, then visited Delhi, Meerut, Patna and Calcutta and finally returned to Oudh to circulate secret papers there. This man moved up and down India, rousing the people to arm. He was a close confidante of the Begum of Oudh, and her palace was his secret headquarter. The deposition of Wajid Ali Shah seemed like a personal affront to him and he



carried arms against the British. He was caught and taken prisoner, tried, and condemned to death. But before the execution could take place, the insurrection had broken out and he escaped.

With the deposition of Wajid Ali Shah, 60,000 men of the Oudhian army were sent home, the army being disbanded. Faced with joblessness they decided they would not sulk but have their revenge on the *feringghis*. They scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country telling the sepoys the stories they had heard. They told them how the British forced them to bite the cartridges and the dangerous consequences if one disobeyed. The army grew restless.

Nana Saheb and Azimullah Khan were not silent. Nana decided to visit some places like Kalpi on the Jamna. From here he passed on to Delhi, from there to Lucknow and finally to Kanpur and from whence he returned home to Bhittoor. They had long talks with the Emperor at Delhi, with the Begum of Oudh, and Moulvie Ahmedulla hatching up a plot to overthrow the British.

From one extremity of India to the other, the envoys of Nana Saheb passed calling on the princes and the nobles, the Hindus and the Muslims to unite in a common cause.

The King of Delhi was chosen as the head, and every one decided that they would restore the splendour and the pageantry of the old Moghals.

Bahadur Shah had every reason to join the people who were fighting for their freedom. As Bahadur Shah was old and ageing, the British were speculating about his successor. When the people learned that the British were contemplating a successor, they resented this interference of the British. The king and his queen, Zeenath Mahal, his favourite queen, wanted her son, Prince Jawan Bakt on the throne and the king assented to it.

But the British would have none of it. They let the Emperor know who was the master and that he had no right to dictate terms, much less protest. They were equally determined not to give her that satisfaction. They had determined to remove the family after Bahadur Shah's death. The queen was determined that her son should be the next king. Bahadur Shah resented this attitude of the British, and he was glad to throw in with the people. The princes and the people of India looked up to him as their head.

Nana Saheb was happy. Gulab Singh of Kashmir, the talukdars of Oudh, Kumar Singh and Amar Singh of Jagdishpura, the adherents to the House of Satara, Sambhalpur, Nagpur and the other principalities were ready. Rango Bapuji was active in the south, urging the rulers, the zamindars and the people to arm themselves. Azimullah Khan moved about in the north, among the cantonments of Kanpur, Barrakpur, Berhampur, Meerut, Ambala, Delhi, everywhere. From the Panjab, heartening news come that most of the principalities that had been wronged by the British were ready to throw in their lot.



The astrologers and the star gazers went about the land telling that the time was at hand when the feringies would be no more. The day was fixed for the general uprising, 31st May 1857.

The year 1857 was the hundreth anniversary of the battle of Plassey fought in Bengal on 23rd June 1757, and it was prophesied that it would be end of British rule. There were growing signs of unrest every where. A wave of voilent feeling swept through the country. The feringhi must go.

The unrest spread throughout the country. The British rulers trembled under the fire of Indian guns. Town after town, village after village fell into the hands of the warriors, and thus threatened to overthrow British Government.

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## DISTURBANCES

The story of greased cartridges had gone around the army camps, the Nineteenth Native Infantry at Berhampur mutinied. The English decided to disband the army and packing them home. So they marched the troops to Barrackpur, where, on 29th March a sepoy killed a British officer on parade. Trouble began with incendiary fires at Barrackpur, Berhampore. In distant Ambala too, fires in the lines indicated the disturbed spirit of troops. The whole country rose with fury to destroy the English rule.

The news had already gone to Barrackpur and the men of the thirty-fourth were restive.

Mangal Pande, a young soldier holding a musket emerged out of his barracks, calling the men to arms and mutiny.

Lt. Baugh, the Adjutant of the 34th, heard about this, he mounted his horse and galloped down to the quarter-guard where a Jamadar and 20 men were on duty. Pande fired at him. Baugh was unhurt. There was a sharp hand-to-hand conflict. But Mangal cut him down with his sword only hurting him. General Hearsey on hearing the news mounted his horse and rode along the lines. But Pande did not shoot the General. He turned the musket upon himself and blew his chest with it. Mangal Pande recovered from his wounds and was court-martialled and later hanged.



*Meerut.*—On May 9th, 1857, the Court-martialing of 85 sepoy of the 3rd Light Cavalry at the Garrison town of Meerut for refusing to touch greased cartridges supplied to them, on religious ground, were shackled and brought to parade before the regiment. The sun was a terrible ball of fire and the earth was like an oven. The shackled men were made to parade with bare feet down the lines. The men begged for mercy but the men of the regiment could do nothing.

The English officers were stationed behind the cannon and held the guns in their hands, ready to pour out bullets and grape if the regiment made any move to help the condemned men. The men of the 3rd Light Cavalry were dismissed. Then things happened fast and sudden. There was a sudden flare up. There were crowds everywhere, armed with guns, swords and knives.

The Eleventh and Twentieth Native Regiments joined their comrades of the 3rd Light Cavalry.

The war drums of the great patriotic war were beaten in Meerut on 10th May. Then the whole of the sepoy of Meerut mutinied. The bazaar was set on fire. They burnt the station, murdered their officers, set fire to their houses in the European quarters. Open the jail, release the prisoners. From now on plunder, murder and arson was on the rampage.

The English mustered a battalion of Riflemen, a regiment of dragoons armed with carbines and a large force of European Artillery; but faced with the infuriated soldiery they had no chance.

Every English man, and women and child sought protection and many of their Indian servants helped them.

When the dawn came the sight that met everybody's eyes was one of horror. From Meerut they victoriously marched to Delhi 40 miles off on May 11th crying out the British Raj was ended.

*Delhi.*—When the sepoy of the Third Cavalry reached Delhi on the morning of the May 11th, 1857 after a dramatic gallop from Meerut, what started as a military revolt in a small garrison took on the character of a fight for independence against the occupying Power. For, it was in Delhi that Bahadur Shah, the last of the Moghal line of emperors, lived, and with remarkable unanimity all the leaders of the great rebellion turned to him as the symbol of a free and sovereign nation, the otherwise dull life at the Red Fort, was electrified. Here they were joined by the garrison, and they occupied the ancient capital. The first clash between the Indian sepoy and British troops took place in Ghaziabad a town near Delhi.

The events in Delhi were none too happy either. The population and the regiments



there were seething with hatred and were waiting for a chance to strike. The arrival of the Meerut soldiery gave them their opportunity. The Thirty-eighth Sepoy Regiment which was in Delhi joined hands with the insurgents. There was then a scene of fearful uproar and confusion.

The Courtyards and the corridors of the palace were swarming with the mutineers, and the dangerous crowd began to swell whilst an excited rabble mingled with the sepoys.

In the quarter of the city inhabited by the English the work of carnage and destruction proceeded unchecked.

The Delhi Bank was attacked and plundered and was gutted to the floor. The Delhi press shared the same fate.

So enraged were the people against these English-men for their past misdeeds of trying to rob them of their trade and commerce, to dethrone their kings and pillage the palaces, that they determined that not one Englishman should live.

They brought out Bahadur Shah from the Palace and under booming guns was once again enthroned and was proclaimed the Moghal King after the fall of Aurangzeb, 11th May 1857. He rode in stately triumph through the streets of the Imperial City. Leaders who joined in the war of independence, whether it was from Maharastra

or from Oudh, from Central India or further east, recognised him as their lawful ruler. He did not want this. The zeal of the revolutionaries was so great he was forced to that position under the threat of bayonet, and the sepoy's tendered their allegiance to the titular Emperor. Delhi became the headquarter of the revolution. And thus was the old king drawn into this net work of intrigue and the fight to free himself of the greedy masters who robbed him of everything he held sacred or honourable.

The fall of Delhi had imparted a political, national significance to the movement. The mutiny had been converted into a revolution. The British Government was shocked. The country was in a fever of freedom.

Important as were the operations at Kanpur, Lucknow and other places, the critical point was Delhi.

Then Lord Canning decided to strike at Delhi, the heart of the movement. This, he thought would cripple the cause and lead to the collapse of the movement. Orders to that effect were issued.

The defeat of the British was horrible. They lost a number of officers and the toll of the dead was sickening,

A British force had established itself in June on the famous ridge to the north of the city, but was barely able to hold its ground against the revolutionary host.



The Sikhs in the Panjab remained faithful to British Raj, they did not want another Muslim Emperor, and they believed that British rule was just and good for their country.

When 23rd June dawned, the revolutionaries grew restive. This was the centenary of the battle of Plassey. They fought the British, the whole day, and made a most desperate attack on the whole army. Day after day, new troops entered Delhi. Mahamed Bakht Khan from Rohilkhand poured his troops through the Calcutta gate. He presented himself before the old Emperor who received him cordially. Bakht Khan was made the Commander-in-Chief.

On 5th July Bernard died of cholera: Reid took over the Command. Chamberlain and Baird Smith came post haste from the Panjab. They planned careful assaults, but the cavalry was routed and their artillery silenced.

Reid resigned and Berigadier-General Archdale Wilson was appointed the new Commander-in-Chief. This was the fourth Commander-in-Chief to take charge in the siege of Delhi. Continuous failures made the English lose hope.

But the courageous and bold Baird Smith shouted "we must not give up hope. We must not release our hold on Delhi even by an inch. If we raise the siege of Delhi, the Panjab will be out of hand. India will be gone, and the Empire ruined for ever."

Then John Lawrence, the Commissioner of the Panjab sent nearly all the troops in his province under John Nicholson to join the force upon the ridge. He also enlisted many of the Sikhs and border Pathans and sent them to help the British at Delhi.

John Nicholson was a hardy soldier ruthless unafraid. He marched towards Delhi with 2,000 men. His first battle was with the Neemich Troops. The whole Neemich Brigade fell. It was 25th August and the hopes of the English rose with their first victory.

Reinforcement and a seige train from the Panjab collected by Sir John Lawrence at the risk of losing hold on his own province, arrived during September.

On the 14th of September 1857, Wilson divided his army into four divisions. Three were commanded by Nicholson, and one by Major Reid. But the table turned. The ruthless British started to gain ground again. The English effected a big breach in the Kashmir Bastion and carried it. The British won a footing upon the ramparts. Delhi's walls yielded and victory seemed easy now. From every side, the British stormed and the revolutionaries fought bravely and desperately.

From 15th to 24th September Delhi was a scene of constant fire, death and dying. By that time three quarters of it had fallen. Bhakt



Khan went to the Emperor and told him to ride with him and escape. But the old king vacillated and Bhakt Khan left the Darbar hall in disgust. After six days of bitter fighting in the streets, the citadel of revolution fell into the British hands.

Mirza Elahi Bakash poured into Bahadur Shah's ear the advices of surrender. Born and bred a traitor, Bakash played his deep game to the hilt. He was in the pay of the English and he helped them secretly by sending plans to take the city. Bahadur Shah agreed to surrender.

By the 25th the fighting ceased and the revolutionaries were swept out. Every rebel had been killed or wounded or had escaped. Two days later Bahadur Shah surrendered to Captain Hudson, when the assurance came that king's life would be spared. The re-capture of Delhi was the turning point of the war and broke the revolutionary organisation such as it was.

Now began a dark period in the history of Delhi. There was general arson and plunder and massacre.

Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay wrote to John Lawrence.

After the siege was over, the outrage committed by our army are simply heart-rendering. A whole sale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend or foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadir Shah.

*Kanpur.*—Within a month nearly every regiment between Allahabad and the Satlej had mutinied, and in most districts of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh civil Government was at an end. Kanpur revolted. General Hugh Wheeler dug up entrenchments and gathered his English people about him and held the sepoys at bay. The fighting continued day and night. Nana Saheb was in Bithoor then. Finding that the Meerut Mutiny had upset his plans, he decided to do what he could by fostering the rebellion and thus marched to Kanpur. Here he took charge of the affairs and became the virtual ruler. He gathered the troops and harassed the enemy. Every citizen joined in the fray. The town was, indeed, in a terrible state. One by one, the English officers fell, and the women died. But still the fight continued. The English held the place for seventy days, displaying marvellous courage and heroism. General Hugh Wheeler found himself in a tight corner. He accepted the offer of Nana Saheb that he and his people will be given safe conduct to go to Calcutta, and decided on 27th June to quit Kanpur.

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There was a disgruntled soldiery at the back. They had never been in favour of the British leaving so easily. Thus when Wheeler and his people were moving away. The musket fired and the bullets whizzed and found their mark. Many were killed.

Azimullah was stunned and when Nana heard about it, his senses were numbed. He had nothing



to do with this treachery. But the crime was done he had to bear the censure. Nana caused himself to be proclaimed Peshwa on 1st July.

Nana and his commander Tatia Tope ; were harassing Wyndham who was now in charge of Kanpur. Havelock entered Kanpur, Nana and Tatia Tope entered Sagar and Gawalior. Settling Kanpur on a stable basis, Sir James Outram and Havelock marched to the relief of Lucknow. As Havelock left Kanpur, Nana re-entered it and began to harass Wyndham who was now in charge of Kanpur. Havelock recrossed the Ganges and entered Kanpur. Nana and Tatia Tope then entered Sagar and Gawalior and threatened Neill. Havelock again hurried up, and the rebels were defeated and Nana fled to Kalpi.

When Sir Colin Campbell the new Commander-in-chief arrived at Kanpur, Tatia Tope had taken the Kalpi Fort and had inflicted a crushing defeat on Wyndham in the battle fought at Srikhandi near the river Pandu. Colin rushed down and joined forces with the frustrated Wyndham. Meanwhile Nana Saheb and Kumar Singh of Jagadishpura joined Tatia Tope. A pitched battle was fought and the revolutionaries were defeated. Kumar Singh retreated to jungles and Nana and Tatia made their way to Gawalior. Colin marched into Kalpi and Bithoor and ravaged the places,

With the taking of Kanpur, all the land from Delhi and Meerut and Allahabad was in English hands.

*Allahabad.*—The unrest spread throughout the country, and found its way into every cantonment in India. On June 6th the bugle of independence was sounded at 9-30 P.M. in Alferd Park in Allahabad calling for liberty and death, the proclamation of Bahadur Shah was read by Moulvi Liaqat Ali at Husri Bagh declaring the end of British rule. He was proclaimed as the Governor of Allahabad. The insurgents killed their officers and there was a general scene of plunder and arson. The telegraph wires were cut and the offices were burnt. Indiscipline raged everywhere.

In Oudh, however, the revolt assumed a national dimension. The patriots fought for their king and country.

Allahabad played an important role in India's first independence struggle. It is replete with historic landmarks connected with the battles of the 1857 revolution. On neem tree in chowk hundreds of revolutionaries were hanged.

*Banaras rose in revolt.*—The disgruntled soldeirs did the same acts that their compatriots did at Meerut.

*The North-west Provinces* now began to rebel also. Peshawar, Ferozpur, Aligarh, Shahjanpur, the Rohilkhand districts, one of the areas where the revolt was attained the greatest success. Ambala everywhere there were insurrection.



*The Mahratta States* raised the standard of rebellion. Kolhapur sepoys rose, plundered the treasury, looted the station and marched on the town. They beat off the attack made by Col. Maughan, the Assistant Political Agent.

*Satara* saw the English in the throes of suffering Lt. Kerr who commanded the place, was beaten with the butt of a musket and later his face was blown up. *Poona* rose.

In the *Panjab* Mian Mir, Mardan, Ludhiana, Jalandha all rose.

In *Central India and Rajputana*.—Bundhelkhand rebelled and the tiny States of the Rajputs were also skimming on the surface of the rebellion. The movement in Shahabad was supported by many of the minor Zamindars and more or less by all the Rajput population of the districts. At Arrah near the district of Jagdishpura Kumar Singh raised his banner.

Bombay, Patiala, Nabha and Jhind stayed out this convulsion and stuck to the British.

*Hyderabad*.—The banner of revolt was raised in all but one or two districts. On July 17th, 1857, the British Residency in Sultan Bazaar was attacked by an army of 5,000 led by Turrebaz Khan and Moulvi Allauddin Khan.

*Lucknow*.—In Oudh many of the people and nobles were unfriendly with British Raj. The

common people felt very sorry that their king had been taken away. The nobles saw the English officers going about the country fixing the taxes upon the fields, and they were afraid that they would soon lose their estates. They knew that they would not be allowed to take just as much as they could from the ryots, they had done in old days. So, many of them joined the revolutionaries. It was the venue of a great gathering under the fiery leadership of Moulvi Ahmedulla Khan,

The European Garrison and population of Lucknow held out in Residency, under the command of Sir Henry Lawrence, the Resident in Lucknow. An entrenchment was dug around the Residency, and filled the cellars with grains, cannon, powder and ammunition. Soon a host of rebels surrounded the place and began to bombard it with heavy guns. Fighting raged fiercely and several of the Europeans were killed. They did not flinch and give themselves up to despair. They decided to hold out as long as they could. By the first week of June the British Government in Oudh collapsed.

The defeat was so terrible that a large number of British officers and Indians were killed. It was a major disaster. In the midst of all this Lawrence died. Lt.-Col. J. Inglis was made the Commander.

On September 25th General Outram, and Havelock and Colonel Neill with a releasing force



fought their way into the Residency through the streets of the city, and brought a welcome reinforcement to the hard pressed defenders who were finally delivered by Sir Colin Canpbell, the Commander-in-Chief on 15th November, after, standing seige for five months. The defence had been materially aided by a number of gallant sepoy. The rebels were routed and the Residency was safe. This enabled the women and children to be evacuated.

From nowhere the Moulvi appeared and gathered the insurgents. They besieged Outram and others. The days that followed were days of hard and gallant fighting. Many a British officer was killed, toll of dead English and Indians grew from day today. Havelock died of dysentery during these operations. By the middle of March 1859 Lucknow finally fell.

*Azamgarh.*—During the revolt of 1857, the town and even the country-side of Azamgarh became for sometime fully independent of British rule. It is quite clear that the rebels gave evidence of a wonderful power of organization, matchless courage and burning zeal. For the love of the motherland. The story of the exploits of the rebels of Azamgarh is eventful, for it infolds an epic of heroism and sacrifice which are unparalleled.

On the eve of the Revolt, there were about five hundred British troops at Azamgarh, belonging to the 17th Infantry. They hurriedly fortified the Collector's Court House, closing up the veran-

dahs with barricaded walls. Numerous sand bags were placed over parapets as additional protection and the main entrance was commanded by two heavy guns covered by a trench. On June 1st the trouble started unexpectedly. The authorities were taken by surprise when they learnt that the Indian Sepoys were holding a seditious meeting on that day. On the next day, some sepoy leaders tried to tamper with some of the troops who had come with Lieutenant Palliser to escort the spare treasure of Gorakhpur and Azamgarh into Varanasi. On June 3 some more treasure came to Azamgarh under the charge of another batch of sepoy. This was the signal for a rising. The sepoy leaders decided to loot a few lakhs of rupees which happened to be in the charge of the British officers. Most of the sepoy of 17 infantry rose in rebellion in a body, and declared independence. They soon managed to subdue the British element and easily got possession of at least five lakhs of rupees.

The British authorities made a desperate attempt to save the situation, but their attempt was foiled. The rebels fought for several hours with a dogged tenacity and got possession of most of the fortified buildings. The Quarter Master Sgt. Lewis, was shot down and other officers had to escape to Ghazipur.

The jail was stormed and the convicts were taken out. These convicts were so much of a reinforcement to the rebels. The attack on the jail and the release of the prisoners were carried



out in the midst of remarkable enthusiasm. Barring a small number, most of the sepoy had by now joined the rebels. Some officers like Lieut. Hutchinson were shot down while they tried to persuade the sepoy to remain loyal. If the sepoy had cared to murder the Europeans, they could have murdered a large number of them. But it is worth nothing. The sepoy did not wish to indulge in a senseless killing. What they needed most immediately was money, and so they tried to collect as much booty as possible. They would immediately get all the guns and much of treasure available in the Government treasury.

In the third week of June, some British fugitives tried to recapture Azamgarh. Mr. Venables formed a small committee of public safety and collected a band of loyal troopers. In the country-side the Palwar Rajputs were supreme and they maintained their independence with a superb bravery. The British officers marched against the Palwar and near Koelsa there was a battle with them which lasted for three full days. In this battle the Palwars fought heroically and stoutly held their own. This battle the rebels actually won. Mr. Venables and his men became disorganised and were driven out. The victory at Koelra filled the rebels with a new zeal. They were now encouraged to march on the city of Azamgarh once again where Mr. Venables was reinforced by a large number of troops recruited by Captain Catania. When the Palwars approached the city, Mr. Venables had to move

out to meet them. He saw that the rebels had entrenched themselves in groves, their front overlooked by high crops. With the recent attack the defenders found that they could not meet the rebels effectively.

The battle of Azamgarh was fought bravely on both sides, but the Palwars proved their superiority and won a decisive victory. The Britishers were completely routed and they were forced to retreat. This retreat soon turned into a mad scramble. In their hour of success the rebels, however, failed to exploit the situation to the utmost. If they had been able to do so, the result would have been extremely perilous to the British. There was however, a grim fight all over the city of Azamgarh in which the British matchlockmen took part but they suffered great losses in the street-fighting. The rebels also had to face losses on their side, but they steadily pressed on the British force. There was hard fighting after this. The British were indeed on the point of retreating to Ghazipur, for they had no provisions left and the entire country-side up by now. As it is the Britishers could stay on in the country-side for some time, while a large part of the district was virtually independent of British rule.

The tide at last turned with the arrival of Gurkhas Regiment who eventually saved the situation for the British.

One British officer, Mr. Pollock toured the country-side. Accompanied by a force he met



the Palwar chief at Koelsa in friendly conference. British diplomacy succeeded as it had always succeeded in the past. The Palwars were finally made to agree to British terms and they declared their friendship for the British Government such was the loyalty of these Palwars that they after this not only gave no trouble but refused to help the great rebel leader Kunwar Singh, when the latter came to Azamgarh in April 1858. This demonstrates the common weakness of the rebels in political acumen and diplomatic ability. Their disunion was naturally exploited by the foreigners. In 1858, the situation in Azamgarh proved favourable to the rebels. At this time the major portion of the British army was stationed at Lucknow. Kunwar Singh who was hovering in western Bihar. Uttar Pradesh joining with a large number of rebels still at large in the vicinity of Azamgarh, made a sudden attack on the town. Kunwar Singh's memorable coup was highly successful and Azamgarh again became free from British rule.

Kunwar Singh's occupation of Azamgarh is a grim chapter in the history of his chequered career. Here he displayed wonderful energy and enterprise and ability for organisation. The British soon collected reinforcements at Varanasi, Ghazipur and Allahabad, and marched on Azamgarh towards the end of March. The initial attack of the British under the command of Col. Milman and Col. Dawes proved unsuccessful. When the news of the British defeat-reached Lord Canning at Allahabad there was great anxiety. He

took personal interests in the military operation and sent Col. Lord Mark Kerr against Azamgarh. Kunwar Singh and his men were now outnumbered and his left wing had to retreat forthwith. The English received further reinforcements from Lucknow. Kunwar Singh collected his forces along the banks of the River Tons. He thought of marching in haste with all his forces to the Ganga, cross it, and attempt to retire to the wild country of Jagdishpura. The heroism which Kunwar Singh showed while fighting a rearguard action is indeed remarkable. He offered a stout and relentless resistance all along and fought with such bravery that the British had to suffer heavy losses at the great battle which was fought at the Bridge over the Tons. The British lost one of their principal leaders Mr. Venables. Retreat was the only alternative that was open to him. Azamgarh was lost this time once for all and the British regained it triumphantly.

*Jhansi.*—Queen Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi had raised the challenge and openly defied the British. She was a woman of remarkable courage. “I will not give up my Jhansi” she said and meant it. The British decided to teach her a lesson and it cost them very dear,

The Resident and the few English people were asked to leave Jhansi and the Queen gave them her escort to leave. But unfortunately men who hated the British were lurking about and when the Resident and others were marching away, they swooped down and fell on the English and killed them.



This was an uncalled for massacre and the Queen did not know how it all came about and why. But since it had been done she began to fortify her place and await the oncoming events.

News came, that Sir Hugh Rose was on his way to recapture Jhansi. Lakshimi Bai did not have enough troops and appealed to Nana Saheb for help. Nana sent a huge contingent under his able General Tatia Tope. He came to Jhansi and the spirits of the inhabitants rose.

Rose advance firmly and set up a siege. There was bitter fighting, the cannon booming throughout the day, the guns firing every now and then. Jhansi made a firm stand and the fighting raged fiercely.

The Queen went about on her horse dressed like a man, cheering and encouraging her troops. She fought bravely at the head of her troops. Everyone looked on her as a goddess and the slogan "I will not give up my Jhansi" became their trumpet call.

They were ready to lay down their lives for their queen who went about with a handsome face burning with fire of vengeance, a proud beauty of a woman, of high character and great energy and much revered by all.

Jhansi held out gallantly. Every assault by every British army failed to pull it down. Then Sir Hugh Rose took over the command. He had

with him all the troops of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Theri and Madras.

From 25th January to 3rd April 1858, Lakshmi Bai held on to Jhansi. Though the British hit her water tanks and reduced the garrison to thirst and starvation, her brave spirit never quailed.

Tatia came to her rescue but their plans misfired and Tatia was defeated. When the final assault was made on 3rd April 1858 Jhansi was a very poor and miserable garrison. It fell. The English entered it and occupied it.

But Lakshmi Bai escaped to Kalpi. Lieut. Bowker pursued her but in the skirmish, he was killed. At Baroda, Lakshmi Bai and Tatia enlisted the sympathies of the soldiery and the people and put up a stand against the relentless Rose.

Rose routed them and they slipped away and managed to occupy the stronghold of Gawalior. It looked for some time as if the rebellion would end in a great triumph. But superiority of organisation and armament told in the end. Rose came marching up to the walls.

This was the last fight the brave queen fought. She was defeated and fled followed by her faithful retinue. The English pursued her and Mander, her maid was struck by a ball. The queen jumped down her horse to help when the



pursuers came upon her. In the brief fray, the queen was killed on 17th June 1858 in the heroic defence of Gawalior, like another Chand Bi Bi.

Since she was dressed like a man nobody suspected that she was a woman, and thus she escaped mutilation at English hands. Ramchandra Rao Deshmukh carried her to a nearby cottage and cremated her.

Thus the British were obliged to fight for their lives. But help was not slow in coming. The Sikhs in the Panjab, the sepoy in Madras, Bombay, and Hyderabad, and a large number of Indian Princes remained loyal to the British. Fresh armies arrived from England and were sent under able commanders to recapture the places captured by the revolutionaries. The subsequent operations were conducted against detached forces unconnected by any bond of union. For several months more the revolutionaries in Central India and Oudh were pursued and attacked by the British Forces. By the end of 1858 the revolution was almost over and the authority of the Government had been generally restored, although in some localities the trouble continued into the following year. In 1859 the Oudh revolutionaries were swept over the frontier into Nepal by Sir Hope Grant and the revolution was at an end.

The British had to fight a series of exhausting battles in the course of which many cities were besieged and relieved and thousands of lives were lost, before they asserted their supremacy.

The Indian mutiny in spite of its horrors, which led to so much suffering, loss of life and bitterness of feeling, certainly cleared the air of many clouds. An undisciplined, hampered and inefficient army was disbanded, and an antiquated and cumbrous system of government was abolished. It was a battle of ideas, the old against the new, the East against the West.

The leaders who personally took part in the revolution received capital punishments, those who only assisted were transported to the Andaman Island. The English soldiers distraught with grief and anger burnt down the villages, turning the country into a desert. They often failed to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty, and a number of the inhabitants of Delhi were massacred after the revolutionaries escaped.

A few days after this the last of the Moghal Emperor passed through Allahabad on his way to Burma. There he spent the rest of his days in confinement as the penalty for his passive share in the doings of the revolutionaries in Delhi. Five years later, the last of the Mogal Emperors died in prison. His two sons were shot during the revolution, and the house of the great Akbar thus came to an end.

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## STRUGGLE

*The Struggle.*—The 1857 struggle was a war of independence against foreign rule, and not a mere mutiny of sepoys. It was not a planned effort and it had no all India leader. It affected the minds and hearts of millions of common people and became in their minds and hearts a struggle against foreign rule. The cry “Maro feringi ko” was the sanguinary drum beat of the struggle. India had risen up in arms with a vengeance.

It was really a national struggle, though it was confined only to some provinces. So long as a substantial majority sympathises with the main object of a movement, it can claim a national status. If a national conscience had not appeared in a vague form, the disgruntled leaders would not have been able to create a vast insurrectionary movement. Bahadur Shah wrote letters to Indian Kings and Princes that his aim was not to establish his own military state, but to drive out the British and then form a federation.

If the struggle was merely a mutiny of sepoys enraged and dissatisfied by the use of fat in cartridges and owing to grievances about their wages and other conditions of service, people ranging from Rulers and Princes to thousands of civilians would not have joined in the fight. It was the last struggle of the old order. The great sacrifices

which the sepoy cheerfully made have not been fully assessed so far. Hundreds and thousands lost their all and gave up their lives. They did not long realise that the company was using them for aggrandizing its political power, and they felt that theirs was the strong arm that had sustained the company's power so long and they could overthrow it whenever they wanted.

Many were the grievances and diverse the motives which led the princes, the chiefs, the leaders, the sepoy and the common people to join in the struggle. They were all united in their desire to get rid of the British. There was no communal jealousy or conflict, and it was a continued effort in which Hindus and Muslims tried to gain a victory against the foreign rulers. Both the communities were well represented in the rebel army. Nana Saheb had his Azimulla Khan, Bahadur Shah his Sobharam and the Rani of Jhansi her trusted Afghan guards.

All religious communities fought the foreign foe together without any religious feelings being brought in. It was a remarkable fact that even when the Indian forces were winning and even when defeat overwhelmed they did not bring in religion. There was never any disunity among them. It is amazing that the leaders of this struggle who could not meet each other who had no planned strategy and who had not had an all India leader never betrayed this weakness. Lack of careful planning and efficient organisation on a national scale weakened the movement. But the



Sikhs, who had earlier fought the British in memorable battles did not side with the revolutionaries.

All through there had been local revolts campaigns and attacks, which were put down easily since the opposition was divided and weak.

Not greased cartridges, not racial discrimination, not the fear of conversion, not the wholesale annexation of ancient principalities, no individual injustice or sectional grievances could wholly explain the struggle of oppressed millions, which spread like prairie fire across this sub-continent. All these had their cumulative effect no doubt. People rose up in arms to regain their kingdoms. They fought for the ashes of their fathers and the temples of their Gods. But, above all, they fought for freedom, to wipe away the ignominy of national slavery. A vast hatred of the foreigner possessed the people. There is not the slightest doubt, that the revolutionaries wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the king of Delhi was the rightful representative. But the Moghal family at Delhi bitterly resented their lowly position under the Company's rule. This fierce enophobia was grounded in a hundred years of alien conquest, which had thrown up its tentacles all over the country by every kind of sufferage and treachery. It is the arrogant and imperialist self-assertion of the British which produce a country-wide discontent. Different elements of society, high and low, man and woman and Brahmin and Sudra and

Hindu and Muslim all forgot their age old differences and joined in the common cause. From Clive to Dalhousie, every British satrap was tempted by cupidity to break words of honour and even solemn compacts. It was those innumerable double crossing deals which gave an individual edge of revenge to the collective yearning for freedom. The historic proclamation of the lost Emperor of Delhi issued on May 16, 1857, significantly observed.

“Whoever shall, in these times, exhibit cowardice or credulously believe the promises of the English imposters, will be very shortly put to shame and receive the reward for their fidelity to England which the rulers of Lucknow got.”

Thus, by May 1859, after two years of terrible struggle, the insurrection came to a dramatic finish. Queen Victoria proclaimed the end of the East India Company and India passed under the Crown, and became a subject-country.

It was a strange struggle that threw up heroes who appeared from nowhere and from every walk of life. It moved men to perform gallant deeds and die strange deaths. The British were actually not powerful or strong but they were aided by the Sikhs, the Gurkhas and the troops from the various States.

The struggle failed because we had not national coherence but were victims of limited loyalties. The British won, more because of



disunity in the country than other factors. Our whole history would bear this out. Freedom and factions cannot co-exist. Nowhere did a revolt commend universal support, even in America and in France. The revolt had been long brewing, the greased cartridges only hastened it. The struggle threw up heroes from every walk of life.

Historians have not taken one basic fact into consideration that India was never under foreign rule before the British established their rule in this country. All the conquering foreign forces which came to India in the course of centuries became Indians. The British were the first to establish foreign rule. The struggle against them did arouse the sentiments of the common people who wished that the growing power of this foreign force must be curbed and destroyed. The biggest lesson of this struggle is treachery of those Indian people and rulers who joined the British and helped them to destroy their Indian brethren and enslave them. The British have been benefited. It was only the British who spread this hatred among the Hindus and the Muslims by introducing the policy of divide and rule, and thus pursuing this policy they ultimately established their sway in India.

At Meerut was thus raised for the first time the banner of Indian independence which drew together Hindus and Muslims, Mahratta and Rohilla and Rajput, patriots from far and near, heroes who performed prodigies of valour, martyrs who sacrificed their all for the liberation of the

motherland. Of them a few can be named. The humble Mangal Pande and Bahadur Shah, the last scion of the illustrious Moghals. Nana Saheb, Peshwa, Kumar Singh, Moulvi Ahmedulla Khan, Tatia Tope, and the astute diplomat Azimullah, Rani Lakshmi Bai and Begum Zinet Mahal, Bhakt Khan, Rohilla Amar Singh, Benni Madho and Hazrath Mahal. They all figured in different areas. Each of them vindicated the nation's soul and this bequeathed a legacy of which we should be proud. They failed against the mighty British Empire in India which was already too well established to be shaken. The seeds of freedom were sown by all those known and unknown heroes of 1857 and nurtured by their very blood.

The Company with all its vast resources military and economic, was able enough to stamp out the struggle in all parts of India. The struggle ended almost as quickly and abruptly as it had come.

Historians have advanced many reasons for the outbreak of the Mutiny. It is a pity that adequate information is not available, for most of the records have perished, and among those which have survived, nearly all the contemporary documents relate to the British point of view. Most of the books have been written by British historians who gave a special colour to events of those days. These writers have given all the praise to the British and the events are described as a mutiny. The side of the rebels is practically unrepresented, and, therefore it is extremely difficult to visualise



the story from the Indian stand-point. The European writers have not only ignored the achievement of the rebels, but have also distorted their story and have pictured them as lawless bandits and have generally sought to gloss over the British atrocities which have been perpetrated in the name of revenge.

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### BAHADUR SHAH

Bahadur Shah Abdul Muzaffer Siraj-ud-din Mohammed Bahadur Shah Ghazi was born in 1773. He was 62 when he nominally ascended the throne of Agra in 1837. By then the great Moghal had crashed and crumbled considerably. With almost no power, Bahadur Shah was quite harmless and engaged in the hobby of dictating beautiful poetry to his favourite sweet heart, Zeenath Mahal, and his chief eunuch Mahabub Ali Khan. He was a king with a small kingdom. The kingdom extended only within the Red Fort. He was the last of the line of Babar, Akbar. He did not have the flamboyant dash of Tatia Topi, nor the vehement anger of the Rani of Jhansi, and at no time he evinced the clever scheming intelligence of Nana Saheb. Instead he was a quiet unassuring old man in dotage. The ever vigilant British bayonets at the gates of Red Fort reduced his position to that of a mere detainee getting a comfortable pension of Rs. 18 lakhs a year. This way the Emperor led his life for twenty years till in 1857 he reigned again as Moghal Emperor throwing the English yoke for a few days

only. At first he resisted with vigour any attempt to make him the focal point of the struggle. The credit for making him participant in the Mutiny goes to his brave young Queen Zeenath Mahal. These few days of monarchy brought him before the Military Court.

But Bahadur Shah, who was the only leader of the Sepoy Mutiny to have been captured and exiled.

The aged king never had any control over the army that wanted him as the Emperor and when by the middle of August 1857 it became certain that Delhi was sure to be captured by the English Army, he sought asylum with his young Queen Zeenath Mahal in Humayun's tomb near Delhi. Here he surrendered to the British under conditions compelling him to adopt that course and to prevent futile bloodshed. He was detained for five months. He was absolutely helpless a pathetic witness to the chaos around.

### MILITARY TRIAL

This trial was one the aftermath of the first war of Indian Independence in 1857.

On January 27, 1858, the Union Jack fluttered over the Red Fort. People began to assemble at the special Audience Hall and the British soldiers guarded the entrance. At 11 O'clock, the trial which went down in the history as one of the most sensational trials to come off in India.



The Military Commission presided over by Lt.-Col. Dawes assembled at the Red Fort. The other members of the Commission were Major Falmer, Major Redmond, Major Sawyer and Captain Rothney. James Murphy was the interpreter, while Major F. J. Harriot was the Prosecutor. The charges against the Royal prisoner were read out.

1. That he encouraged and aided mutiny and rebellion against the State.

2. Encouraged and abetted Mirza Moghal, his son and others to rebel and war against the State.

3. Conspired with a number of persons.

4. On May 16, 1857 or thereabouts became accessory to the murder of 49 persons, chiefly women and children of European descent.

A tottering old man was brought before the judges at half-past twelve. Supported on one side by his only remaining son and on the other by his own attendant, the prisoner appeared the most pathetic figure ever. He seated himself in a most resigned mood.

After customary oath, the judge advocate and interpreter asked the prisoner if he had a mind to challenge the appointment.

"No" came the frail voice from the prisoner.

The prisoner had been kept waiting for hours in Dewan-e-Khas, which once bustled with the splendour and glory of Moghal aristocracy.

The trial as such lasted 21 days, witness after witness given evidence. It was mostly a one-sided affair.

On the 21st day, the examination of witnesses concluded and the accused Bahadur Shah made a lengthy statement, during the course of which he declined the charges: He was forcibly elevated to the position of the emperor under the threat of bayonets from the mutineers. The old king denied everything. The soldiery made me a prisoner. I remained in their power as such. But I never took any part in their conferences.

After the statement of the accused the Advocate-General addressed the jury at great length. The tribunal giving its verdict rejected the pleas of the accused. He was found guilty of assumption of independent sovereignty in defiance of treaties, and of warring against the State. The penalty for which he became liable was the sentence of death as a traitor.

But Captain Hudson had assured him of his life at the time of his surrender. So without passing any sentence, the verdict and proceeding were sent to Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Panjab.



ظفر جاتے ہیں رنگون کو — یہاں دہلی کی خواری ہے

Sir John Lawrence recommended the transportation of Bahadur Shah overseas. Zèenath Mahal and son Jawan Bakat were given option to accompany the ex-king or being confined to Bengal. In October 1858, Bahadur Shah accompanied by the two was sent to Calcutta under heavy guard. At Calcutta they were placed on board a warship and conveyed to Rangoon. Among the countless killed in Delhi were his two sons. He was not a free man; he was virtually an imperial prisoner.

Five years later, the last of the Moghals died at Rangoon at the age of 87 in 1862 in extreme misery. Thus the last chapters of the first war of Indian Independence came to a close.

After the fall of Burma to the Japanese in 1942, Netaji Subhas Chander Bose erected a memorial for the dead monarch in Rangoon. Bahadur Shah's descendants to whom a nominal pension is still being paid by the Government of India, lived in Burma till the advent of freedom and after India attained independence migrated to India and Pakistan.

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### LAKSHMI BAI, JHANSI KI RANI

She was born at Benaras on October 21, 1835 to Moraphant Jambe, then in the service of Chimnaji Appa younger brother of Peshwa Baji Rao. Lakshmi Bai was married in childhood to

Gangadhar Rao, Raja of Jhansi. In the Maharatta war of 1818, Jhansi along with other States came under the British sway. Raja Gangadhar was the last of the Jhansi rulers to ascend the throne in 1838 and reign for fifteen years. It was only in 1851 that a son was born to the royal couple but the child died in a few months. The raja was heart-broken and before death, hastened by the shocking loss of his own son and heir, adopted Ananda Rao, a distant kin, as his son. Meantime Raja Gangadhar died, and Rani Lakshimi Bai's representation was rejected. She repeated the appeal. For the second time she failed. Embittered and frustrated the young Rani waited for a chance. There was revolt in the North-west Provinces. The local sepoy's attacked the fort at Jhansi. The British surrendered the fort. Her red flag was hoisted on the fort and she was proclaimed the ruler. For one year she ruled Jhansi as the ideal queen and Commander. Soon the tide of battle changed. Rani Lakshimi Bai had taken up arms to gain for her five year old ward the principality of Jhansi, which had been denied to him by Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse. She put on men's cloths, went like a whirlwind at Gwalior, encouraging the soldiers. She donning the red and white uniform of the Gwalior regiment, was sitting near one of Tatia's batteries, British troops appeared on the scene. In her desire to save from capture her young ward, the brave Rani rushed like a wounded lioness towards Brigadier Smith, who had overtaken her, and killed him with a single blow of her sword. Riding her horse in a frenzy and with only her per-



sonal maid by her side, she succeeded in reaching a ravine. Rani Lakshimi bai was shot at and she was killed on 17th June 1858 and her body was cremated on 18th June 1858. She was one of those leaders of the Mutiny who was denied a decent funeral, whose bravery on the battlefield earned her the praise of no less a person than the British General, Sir Hugh Rose, who led the armies against her. In his opinion she was the 'best and the bravest of all the rebels.'

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### NANA SAHEB

After the failure of the Mutiny Nana Saheb went to Nepal and lived there. But he was forced to quit Nepal at the insistence of the Ruler upon whom the British Government exerted pressure for his extradition. It is stated that he was killed by a tiger, while crossing over India through the Terai jungles.

But even British historians are not sure that Nana died this way, for Malleon, a renowned British authority remarks that "unfortunately nothing definite is known as to what happened to Nana Saheb."

He left Nepal, crossed the Terai hills, created a rumour that he was killed by a tiger, reached the seashore at Kutch and finally reached the city of Morvi. He lived there for two years and later moved to a cave near Sihor a small

town near Bhavnagar, and there he lived until his death.

One of his servants, a Brahmin stated that Nana Saheb lived there under an assumed name, Dayanand Yogindra and he claims to have seen scars of bayonets and bullet wounds on his body. Another servant an old woman affirms that a few days before his death he revealed to her that he was Nana Saheb Peshwa in exile. So much about his life in the cave. It is a deep large cave, which Nana Saheb is believed to have made and lived in.

Another version is that an entry in the diary of Azimullah Khan, an adviser of Nana Saheb says that Nana Saheb lived in the town of Pratapgarh in Uttarpradesh till 1926. He too lived with him till the Peshwa died and afterwards left the city to destinations unknown. The fate of Azimullah Khan is also not known.

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### **TATIA TOPI**

Tatia Topi emerged in the Sepoy Mutiny as the military adviser to Nana Saheb at Kanpur on August 21, 1857. In the months that followed Tatia Topi himself a great General and if he had been a little more confident of himself, would have altered the course of the Mutiny. Finally, marching to relieve the defenders of the Fort at hansi he was defeated by Sir Hugh Rose. Later after the mutiny was quelled in all other parts of India,



Tatia Topi kept up a fight that was remarkable in view of the scanty following he had. Whole Brigades of the British army converged on him, yet he slipped through enemies watching every glade of the jungle where he had taken asylum. Finally weary and worn he went to Gawalior, one of his associates, Raja Man Singh of Marwar, a talukdar decided to win amnesty for himself by betraying Tatia Topi and on the midnight of April 7, 1859 led the English soldiers to the hide out where Tatia Topi was sleeping. By then the Mutiny had been quelled in other parts of India and Lord Canning had embarked on a policy of clemency. But Tatia Topi was too dangerous an enemy to be left alive and was sentenced to death by a military court. He was hanged on April 18, 1859. The uniform he was wearing on that fateful day is still preserved in the British Museum.

Symbolic of British administration for his leadership of the rebels is the remark by historian Malleon, who acclaims him as "A marvellous guerilla fighter."

For a whole ten months he kept the English armies guessing. He carried on a guerilla campaign in the traditional Mahratta fashion with great skill like Sivaji.

Tatia Topi gave the British a chase that became the talk of the world. This will O' the wisp was here, there, everywhere nowhere.

As the "London Times" commented "He has sacked stations plundered treasuries, emptied arse-

nals, collected armies, lost them; fought battles, lost them; marched thirty to forty miles per day like forked lightning. He has crossed the Narbada to and fro; he has marched between our columns behind them. Up mountains, over rivers, down valleys through ravines he moves zig-zagging, burning mail, making English life miserable and as sweet as a bed of thorns."

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### KUMAR SINGH

The English began with Kumar Singh. They pursued him in the jungles and the ravines, but Kumar Singh was clever. He skilfully managed retreat. At Atrotia he defeated Sir Eyre, and with the help from Azamgarh he began to harass the English while crossing the river Taun, a battle was fought near Bhatia, a stray bullet struck his arm. As he could not remove the bullet he amputated his arm and threw it into the river. He surprised Le-Grand in the camp at Arrah, when the guns roared Le-Grand was blown to pieces with many others.

On 23rd April 1858, he entered his ancestral house Jagdishpura. The flag of freedom flew from the turrets of the houses. But on 26th the amputated arm proved fatal and he died a free man.

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### MOULVI AHMEDULLAH SHAH

He tried to recapture the glory of Oudh and began to enlist the sympathies and help of all the vassals of the King of Oudh. Many joined his banner and when Lala Jagannath Singh of Pawan was approached, the latter promised to aid, invited him to his palace. As the Moulvi approached the gates of the fort, the Raja's brother shot him dead. Immediately the head severed and sent to the English. Rs. 50,000 were paid as a reward for this base and treacherous deed.

“By far the best soldier among the rebels,” Malleson said: “If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongly destroyed, of his native country, then most certainly the Moulvi was a true patriot.”

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### THE INDIAN MUTINY

On June 5, 1857, Queen Victoria found a memorandum from the Prime Minister Lord Palmerston that ‘widespread mutiny and disaffection among the native troops of India is reported.

As early as December 1856 her husband, Prince Albert, had predicted the possibility of such an emergency and had warned the British cabinet that he felt that the Indian sub-continent was seething with unrest and that the number of British regiments in India must be increased,

The Leader of Opposition in the British Parliament, Benjamin Disraeli, had represented to the Queen more than once that the policy of the Doctrine of Lapse pursued by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India was sure to bring in trouble. Especially the deposition of Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Oudh, was felt by Disraeli to be a wrong step and he had pleaded with the Queen that this action would alienate the Indian Princes, who now found that their thrones were not safe from the grasps of the East India Company. The Queen too shared Disraeli's apprehensions.

Meanwhile, India throbbed with Freedom Fever and in the dusty glare of 1857 odd tales ran through the villages as runners fitted by and the tale of greased cartridges spread and spread. The news that cartridges smeared with the fat of pig and cow were being used to pollute the sepoys caste gathered momentum.

On June 23 a grand banquet was held in London to celebrate the British Victory in the battle of Plassey hundred years earlier. Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, took the first opportunity to personally assure the Queen that the revolt would be quelled in a few weeks.

As such it was a surprise to the Queen, when the next intelligence from India brought news of the capture of Delhi by the sepoys.

In common with the average Briton, the Queen suffered acute mental torture, as news of



rebel success continued to arrive. "We are all in sad anxiety about India, which engrosses all our attention", she wrote to her uncle, the King of Belgium. "Troops cannot be raised fast or large enough and the horrors committed by the rebels on women and children are unknown in these ages. The reputation of England's power has had a rude shock..... We have nearly gone to the full extent of our available means and may with difficulty retrieve the situation."

Queen Victoria maintained cordial relations with Napoleon III, the Emperor of France, and when he heard about the capture of Delhi by Indian sepoys, the Emperor informed Queen Victoria that he was willing to allow any number of British troops to pass through France en route to India. But the Queen graciously refused this offer.

But at the same time, carrying troops in ships to India via the Cape of Good Hope involved considerable delay and after hearing about the Fall of Delhi, the Queen asked her Ambassador in Istanbul (the capital of Turkey), Lord Startford de Redcliffe, to request the Sultan of Turkey for permission to allow British troops to cross the isthmus of Suez (the Suez canal had not been constructed in those days) by march.

The Sultan agreed to the request and ordered his Viceroy, the Pasha of Egypt, to give them all facilities to march across the Isthmus. From then on till the end of the Mutiny the Suez

Isthmus became the transhipment point for news and army.

In her anxiety to get the news from India, the Queen found it difficult to wait till the official intelligence arrived from India twice a month by sea mail. She directed that the ships carrying official news from India must touch at Trieste in Italy and the British Consul at Trieste was to send a resume of the news by the recently invented telegraph. Despatches arriving with information about the mutiny were to be immediately sent to the palace and the Queen and Prince Albert spent many anxious hours before a map of India, marking the fortunes of the Sepoy Mutiny with paper flags. Officers arriving from India were asked to come to the palace to give their personal account of the holocaust, and General Campbell, coming to see the Queen prior to his departure for India, found the Queen so anxious about the insurrection that he assured her that he would be proceeding straight from the palace to the ship that was to take him to India.

As tension and feeling mounted against the rebels in India the handful of Indians in Britain mostly Indian princes deprived of their territory by the E.I. Company and exiled by the British government from India, found themselves the target of British fanatics. The worst to suffer was Maharaja Duleep Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the famous ruler of the Panjab. The Maharaja had been taken to England by the British after the defeat of his forces in the



Sikh wars of 1840's and now even the members of the British House of Lords found it difficult to control their animosity against him.

But they knew that the Maharaja was a special protege of Queen Victoria and that she might not approve of any open act of hostility against him.

The Queen, it must be said in her favour, did not share this view. "I am very much surprised at your observation," she wrote back to Lord Clarendon, "it is hardly to be expected that he, a deposed Indian sovereign not very fond of the British rule as represented by the East India Company, should like his countrymen called friends and monsters and to see them brought in thousands to be executed. His best course is to say nothing....."

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### HUMILIATION DAY

By September 1857 it became apparent to the British Cabinet that the situation in India might have gone out of control and that it would be judicious to prepare the British nation for the worst consequences.

But the Queen felt that while it was appropriate that a day must be set apart for national mourning, the name must be more befitting and suggested that October 11, 1857 be

set apart as the Day for Divine Prayer and Intercession. As such on 11-10-1857 throughout Great Britain prayers were said for success to British arms (an indirect tribute to the brave Indian Sepoys).

But as months rolled by, thanks to the lethargy displayed by the majority of Indian princes, the Sepoy Mutiny began to peter out and the Fall of Delhi marked the beginning of the end of the gallant fight. The first to congratulate the Queen was the Emperor of France.

As the embers of the Mutiny began to die down, all the problems which had been so far subjugated to the background came to the fore. The first problem that came to the attention of the Queen was the fate of the East India Company. The Indian Mutiny gave the death-blow to the system.

Now that the Empire of India was directly under her rule the Queen decided to issue a formal Proclamation to the Indian nation.

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## INDIAN MUTINY, 1857—A RUSSIAN VIEW

BY P. SHASTITKO

The first report of a popular uprising in India reached Russia on June 27, 1857, when Khrepovich, the Russian Ambassador in London, telegraphed the news to St. Petersburg of the outbreak at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi by the insurgents. On the same day he wrote memorandum to Prince Gorchakov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and appended extracts from the London papers. A detailed description of events was sent by Col. Ignatiev, Russian Military Attache in London.

Ignatiev wrote: "The uprising in India is not a chance mutiny of several native regiments against the company; it is rather an expression of the desire of the region to free itself from a hateful foreign yoke." Ignatiev believed the reasons for the mutiny lay in the "abuses of the administrative personnel and the devouring greed of the company." In Ignatiev's opinion, the Company's policy in relation to the Indian States, conducted by the Earl of Dalhousie, led to even the "feudal leaders of India" realising that "sooner or later every convenient piece of land within the reach of the English merchants will be seized by them."

When it appeared in the Press, the sensational news from London roused the Russian public opinion. "There is hardly a question more important, interesting or grave than that of India in the political world today. News from India is awaited with the greatest impatience; the most

exciting headlines are 'India', 'Indian Post' and 'Correspondence from Calcutta'," declared the liberal magazine "Otechestvennye Zapiski" ("Fatherland Notes"). "Indian affairs have become the most vital problem of the day. The eyes of all Europe have been fixed on India for five months," the magazine "Russky Vestnik" told its readers.

A furious polemic developed in the newspapers and magazines as to Russia's attitude to the mutiny. The public found it hard to obtain a correct idea of the reasons for the mutiny and how it was developing since the Russian press took most of its material on the subject from English newspapers. That circumstance explained the contradictions and confusion in the viewpoints not only of the different magazines and newspapers but even in the view of various writers.

The clearest and most definite opinion about the mutiny was undoubtedly found only among the Russian revolutionary democrats. Their views were expressed in N. A. Dobrolyubov's article "An Opinion of the History and Contemporary State of the East India Company," which appeared in the September issue of the magazine "Sovremennik" (Contemporary). (Contemporary, the organ of Russian democracy), N. G. Chernyshevsky, writer and philosopher who headed the Russian revolutionary democratic movement, noted with satisfaction that "the article really turned out well."



Dobrolyubov's article was distinguished, for one thing, for its mature approach to the subject. It considered the mutiny not as a chance outburst of dissatisfaction but as a "historically necessary affair." Dobrolyubov began his study of the reasons for the mutiny by investigating all the springs and levers of the East India Company's machinery of exploitation, combining, as it did, the insolence of the robber with the greed of the petty shopkeeper.

With complete objectivity Dobroloubov traced the history of the establishment of British rule in India and the growth of a small company of enterprising merchants into an oligarchy of commercial tycoons. He flatly rejected the claim of historians and journalists who, through naivete or hypocrisy, talked of the "civilizing" mission of the English. "England's ultimate aim is state and private profit and not civilization," Dobrolyubov wrote.

In his estimate of the mutiny Dobrolyubov took the side of those who did not regard it as a religious revolt of "fanatical Hindus" or a "mutiny of soldiers who have gotten out of hand," but as the emancipatory uprising of people who had selflessly risen against invaders. He was able to understand that "... the people rebelled because they finally detected evil in the very organisation of the British rule."

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## RUSSIAN ATTITUDE

At that time official Russian view was presented by the newspaper "Russky Invalid," which carried regular and thorough reports on the events in India. On October 13, 1857, the newspaper published a long article by Sergeberg entitled "East Indies Affairs." The author's sympathies were exclusively on the side of the insurgent Indians. "The British lion is accustomed to clawing up the political bodies of States. This time, as regards India, it may have to restrain its fierce habits." Sergeberg found the reason for the mutiny, in the "English brutal treatment of the Indians (particularly when collecting taxes) and their absolute ignoring human rights."

The highly popular newspaper "Peterburgskie Vedomosti," edited by A. A. Kraevsky, a member of the political group known as "Westerners," also kept its readers well-informed. On July 30 the paper began to run a series called "Letters about East Indies Indignation" in which the author advised his readers to take a critical attitude towards the London papers inasmuch as "the English," he said, "possess the Roman art of hiding or denying failures." From the history of how British rule was established in India the author drew the conclusion that "the very structure of the Indo-British Empire contains in itself an embryo of death." He labelled as nonsense the claims of British journalists that the reason for the mutiny lay in the officers having ignored the religious feelings of the Hindus. (The introduction of those ill-started cartridges for new rifles.)



As to those who claimed that "enlightened Europe" had a cultural mission in "stagnating, barbaric Asia," the "Peterburgskie Vedomosty" called the thesis unscrupulous Pharisaism, arguing reasonably that "England acquired a vast empire in order not to civilize it but to devour it."

The reason for Russian authors devoting so much attention to Europe's "civilizing role" in Asia was that it was the argument used to justify the frank and undisguisedly cynical actions of the colonisers. Reactionary circles in Russia also tired to utilise that jesuitical weapon. The "Rusky Vestnik" reflected the opinion of those circles when it said: "We do not sympathise with England's foreign policy; we have points of conflict with her. But we shall always have the magnanimity and conscientiousness to recognise the unity of our tasks. Both England and Russia are called upon to spread the light of the European way of life in the moral darkness of stagnating Asia. Here we are allies; here there is solidarity between us."

However, justice requires us to note that the opinion of the "Rusky Vestnik" did not receive any support from the Russian public. That is quite understandable. Besides sympathising with the Indian people in their struggle for freedom and independence the Russian people were themselves still smarting from the insult to their national pride inflicted by British and French arms in the Crimean War of 1854. Hence, their sympathies were on the side of those fighting to free India from the colonial yoke.



The grim echoes of the storm in Hindustan rolled over the snowy peaks of the Himalayas and across the plains of Russia until they reached St. Petersburg. The progressive section of the Russian public detected in that storm the power of the first spring squall forerunner of the coming storms of emancipation.

### RUSSIAN INTEREST

Soviet scholars study the history of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-1859 with great interest. That interest is based on an understanding of history not as an aggregate of subjective views but as a corollary of objective laws; a study of which makes it possible to understand the direction in which society is moving. The Indian people's heroic struggle in the past, India's formation into a great power in the present, and the prospects for her future development make a study of Indian history both fascinating and responsible.

According to the Soviet scholars, the Indian Mutiny is not an isolated incident. The mutiny in India, the taiping rebellion in China, Babiism in Iran, and the rise of the emancipatory movement in Indonesia all represented the reaction of the peoples to attempts to convert their countries into colonies.

The mutiny in India was directed against British landlords, peasants, artisans and sepoy

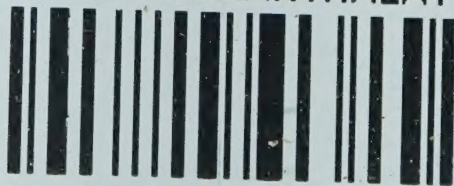


were its chief motive force. But beside  
there was a feudal force headed by nobles  
the British deposed and who saw an  
to regain their lost rights and privileges.  
chief weakness of the mutiny obviously  
lack of organisation.

In spite of the fact that the mutiny was  
down it played an exceptionally important role  
developing national consciousness in India  
laid a firm foundation for joint action on the part  
of her anti-colonial forces, irrespective of religion,  
caste or language.



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